MEMOIR OF BISHOP WILKINSON

VOL. I.

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Photo: Lock & Whitfield. Walter L. Colls Ph. Sc.

Mr. Wilkinson in 1879.

MEMOIR

OF

GEORGE HOWARD WILKINSON

BISHOP OF ST. ANDREWS DUNKELD AND DUNBLANE
AND PRIMUS OF THE SCOTTISH CHURCH
FORMERLY BISHOP OF TRURO

BY

ARTHUR JAMES MASON D.D.
ONE OF HIS CHAPLAINS

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

NEW IMPRESSION

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PREFACE

In executing the task confided to me by the family of Bishop Wilkinson, it has been my wish and my endeavour, not so much to set forth the events of his life in succession and in detail, as to give a true picture of the man, that posterity may have some notion of what his contemporaries saw in him, and why. Whether I have succeeded in this endeavour or not, I cannot tell. If I have, the success is due to the prayers which have been offered for my work during its progress. It is not easy for ordinary men to depict the Saints in their exaltation and their abasement, or in their daily walk with God.

I have attempted to enable the reader to form his own opinion of the subject of the memoir by setting before him his own words in letters and in speeches. I have also given many reminiscences and appreciations from the hands of people who knew him at different periods of his life. This appeared to me likely to bring out the historic reality more truthfully than summaries or descriptions of mine would do it, and with greater variety and freshness. I have departed largely from chronological sequence in certain parts of the book, in order to display more clearly particular portions of his life—for instance, his relations with Archbishop Benson and with the Community of the Epiphany, and at a later time his work for South Africa and for the cause of Unity in Scotland.

It has been my desire to show the Bishop not only, nor mainly, in his public capacity. His home life, his relations with his family and with his friends, the happy environment in which he worked, have seemed to me at least as important as anything of a more outward character. With this view I have not

removed from his letters many details which may not seem to be of great intrinsic importance, but which nevertheless show his surroundings.

The figure which I seem to see before me is not chiefly that of a great ecclesiastic—though an attentive student will see how important, if sometimes hidden, a part the Bishop performed in the politics of the Church, especially during his ministry at St. Peter's, Eaton Square. It is not the figure of a great personage in society—though few people were better known by sight, or more sought after, or better qualified for shining in the world by grace of manners, and knowledge of the topics of common interest, and the courtesy which lends itself to the demands of every claimant. It is the figure of one who was before all things a man of God. In order the more fully to reveal this, I have ventured to quote somewhat more freely from his private diaries than I should have felt justified in doing in the case of most other men. It would be impossible fully to understand the life of Bishop Wilkinson without knowing how intensely, how incessantly he lived in the consciousness of the unseen world. It pressed upon him with a more absorbing interest than the things of sense. The presence of God, and, along with the presence of God, the presence of those whom he had loved in God and who had been removed from earthly sight, were more felt than visible objects. It was his joy and strength to live in full view of these spiritual companionships. But if it was his joy and strength, it was also his pain and his trial. However little he allowed the world in general to know it, those who were most intimate with him—and he cast himself freely upon their sympathies—were aware that from time to time his sense of communion with heavenly regions was taken away, and the anguish which he suffered in consequence was a token and a measure of its surpassing greatness when it was there. It is necessary that both sides of his experience should be known.

I desire here to express my best thanks, first to those who have aided me with their powerful intercessions, and secondly to those who have lent me precious letters or contributed recollections of the Bishop. Their names will in most

cases be seen at the points where their contributions occur, but where the names are withheld the gratitude is no less sincere. I feel bound, however, to acknowledge my special obligations to the Rev. C. Green, the Bishop's early friend and colleague, for help about the earlier part of the life; to the Hon. Emma D. Pennant, for aid in connexion with the work at St. Peter's, Eaton Square; to the Mother Julian, in connexion with the Community of the Epiphany, for which he cared so profoundly; to the Rev. G. T. S. Farquhar, Precentor of St. Ninian's Cathedral, Perth, whose well-kept Diary has been invaluable for the Scotch period. Above all I would thank the Bishop's sons and daughters for the unreserved way in which they have placed in my hands everything that might enable me to understand and interpret their Father's life and action and character, and for undertaking many inquiries, often involving much labour, on my behalf. To Miss Carina Wilkinson I have turned continually for manifold assistance, and never in vain. Her preliminary sorting of materials has saved me many a long hour's work.

Canterbury: St. Ninian's Day, 1908.

P.S.—To the thanks which I have expressed above I must now add my gratitude for help given me while the book was passing through the press. Mrs. Davies, the Bishop's eldest daughter, and Dr. H. Scott Holland have laid me under specially deep obligations by their criticisms and suggestions, their corrections and additions, proceeding in either case from a heart that loved and a mind that understood the Bishop in a way that was given to few.

A. J. M.

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MEMOIR

OF

BISHOP WILKINSON

FIRST PERIOD

EARLY LIFE

CHAPTER I

CHILDHOOD AND EARLY YOUTH

The Wilkinsons have long held a good position among the hardy families of gentlefolk in the counties of Northumberland and Durham. Richard Wilkinson served the office of High Sheriff of Northumberland in the seventeenth century. His second son, Thomas, married Mary, daughter of William Fetherstonhalgh of Brancepeth, through whom the estates at Brancepeth came into the possession of the Wilkinsons. Thomas Wilkinson's youngest brother, William Wilkinson, of Crossgate, in the county of Durham, who died in 1717, had a large number of children. His eighth son, Anthony, who succeeded to the estate of Crossgate, married Deborah, daughter and coheiress of Gilbert Machon, and had three sons. The eldest of these, William, was the ancestor of the present family of the Wilkinsons of Hulam, Sheraton, and Clennell. The second, Thomas Wilkinson of Brancepeth and Wingate, who died in 1782, had again three sons, of whom the eldest, also called Thomas, took up his abode at Oswald House in the county of Durham. By his wife, Ellen,

only daughter and heiress of George Hurry of Yarmouth, Thomas Wilkinson of Oswald House had likewise three sons. The eldest was the Reverend Thomas Wilkinson, who at the close of his life resided in Surrey, where he had property near Oxted, but spent much of his time abroad. The second was George Wilkinson, of Oswald House, the father of the Bishop. The third was Anthony Wilkinson of Old Elvet, Durham, High Sheriff of that county in 1875.[1]

George Wilkinson, the father of the Bishop, appears to have been a man of marked peculiarities. He was a typical north-country Englishman of an old-fashioned type—manly, a lover of his horses and dogs, humorous and hearty, shrewd and practical in his affairs. He had qualified for the profession of a solicitor, but appears never to have practised ; in politics he was the most extreme of Conservatives. He was also a religious man in his somewhat puritanical way. To his children he was an affectionate father, and exceedingly proud of George in particular ; but there was evidently something of the martinet in him, and probably it was from him, in the first instance, that the Bishop derived that punctuality and strict adherence to rule and method and order, which formed so leading a characteristic of his whole life.

The Wilkinsons appear to have been always fortunate in their marriages, and George Wilkinson in particular. His wife was Mary Howard, sixth and youngest child of John Howard of Ripon by his first wife, Susanna Elizabeth, daughter of Colonel W. Adlom. Three children were born of the marriage. The first was George Howard, born at Oswald House, Durham, on May 12, 1833 ; the second, called Henry Chandler, after a brother of Mrs. Wilkinson's, went into the army ; the third, Mary, who still survives, married Mr. Ernest Widdrington.

Mrs. Wilkinson died when George was only nine years old, but she left behind her a memory fragrant with piety and sweetness. She was a good, holy woman, and the Bishop often said that the thought of her goodness influenced him all through his life. 'To her it was,' writes an old friend, 'that he owed

[1] See the pedigree in Surtees' *History and Antiquities of the County of Durham*, vol. i. p. 81.

all the congenital goodness by which he seems from the first stage and onwards to have been distinguished.' 'To-day,' he wrote to this friend in 1874, 'my own mother died thirty-two years ago, and to-day the look of those blinds pulled down and the touch of the face as we kissed it is as fresh as if it were yesterday.'

His devotion to his mother stands out prominently in the recollections of his only sister. Mrs. Wilkinson was very delicate, and Mrs. Widdrington remembers how her brother used to hasten home from school, in order to walk beside his mother's pony, as she rode along at a foot's pace. To the serious talks—serious far beyond his age—which his mother had with him on these occasions, the Bishop traced his vocation to Holy Orders. He was also a most affectionate brother, and would often stand up for Mary against the oppressions of a not too kind nurse, in whose charge she was left after her mother's death. Mary and he both went to school in Durham ; and twice a day the elder brother escorted Mary to her school on the way to his own, and fetched her from it on his way back. This kindly conduct on his part won for him the interest and favour of the good Dean Waddington.

His first remembrances of church-going were not altogether encouraging.

When staying with him at Truro in 1887, Lady Emily Chichester says, driving with him from the cathedral, he told us his earliest recollection of going to church was when he was just the age Shane then was (nearly four), and he turned to him and said, '*I* hadn't been taught to take off my hat in church ; and I wasn't taken to a nice church and bright service like you ; but I was sitting nearly hid in a pew, and suddenly the old clergyman called out, If that little boy doesn't remove his hat, he must be turned out of church ! ' and he added, ' I am sure he never thought that little boy would some day become a bishop ' ; and the Bishop laughed so merrily at the recollection !

The school to which he went was the ancient Grammar School of Durham. The head-master at that time was a remarkable man, named Edward Elder, who afterwards became head-master of the Charterhouse. A native of Barbadoes, but a Balliol scholar and First Class man, he succeeded to the head-mastership

at a time when the school had sunk in numbers and in reputation, and by sheer force of character overcame the manifold difficulties in his way, and

not only impressed his strong personality upon his pupils, says Bishop Mitchinson, but turned out an exceptionally vigorous and able set of youths, who more or less made their mark in the world, and who one and all cherished for him a real life-long hero-worship, and reproduced in their lives the genuine manliness, singleness of purpose, and power of influence, which were so eminently characteristic of him.

Undignified and irascible, he yet was felt by the boys to be just in his dealings with them, and though his methods of teaching were not altogether what would now be generally approved, 'he treated us,' says the same critical but generous disciple, 'as his intellectual companions and confidants, and so made us unconsciously pursue a high ideal in study and thinking.' [1]

Some touching lines, from the pen of Mr. R. K. A. Ellis, to the memory of the head-master, appeared in the 'Cornhill Magazine' for February 1861, when Thackeray was editor. Thackeray seems to have been a schoolfellow of Elder's, and refers to him in the 'Newcomes' as 'my friend Dr. Senior.' Mr. Ellis recalls :

The hill, where many a summer's day
To watch the game our master stood ;
Below, the merry group at play,
Above, the overhanging wood.

The long low boat-house, on the shore
Of lazy, shadow-loving Wear,—
Now lashed to spray by labouring oar ;
Now startled by the schoolboys' cheer.

The mill, unvexed by clacking wheel,
Long given to silent mouldering ease ;
Whose waters, idly pent, reveal
The bole and branch of stately trees.

Three flood-stained arches of a bridge,
The link between two leafy bowers ;
The reflex of a shadowy ridge
O'ertopped by crumbling Norman towers.

[1] From some unpublished notes kindly lent for the purposes of this Memoir.

Hard by that solemn house of God,
The turf 'neath which our master lies ;
Turf which in sport we lightly trod,
Life's chances hidden from our eyes.

Such was the place where this ' best of friends ' had ' taught to love and fear.' And after his pupils had passed from the place, Elder still continued to show his practical interest in them. For some time after George Wilkinson went to Oxford, he used regularly to send to Elder copies of prose and verse for his useful criticism.

There was nothing very remarkable in George Wilkinson's schooldays. Mr. Airey, the venerable Rector of St. Helen's, Bishopsgate, who was then a master in Durham School, writes, ' He was a very quiet and plodding boy, and worked his way steadily to the head of the school.'

Among Elder's pupils at Durham was Bishop Mitchinson, above mentioned, Master of Pembroke College, Oxford, and Canon of Gloucester, besides many others who have done and are still doing good work both in Church and State.

George Howard Wilkinson, says Bishop Mitchinson, going over his recollections of those times, *clarum et venerabile nomen*, was my schoolfellow and classmate right up the school. He entered a little after me, and remained on half a year longer, but we were of the same age, well-matched and friendly rivals. At first we were enthusiastic friends, and much at each other's homes. He once remarked to my mother, after receiving one or two helpful suggestions in some Latin verses we were hammering out together at my house, ' O, Mrs. Mitchinson, what would I give to do Latin verses like you ! '

The Rev. Joseph Hudson, Honorary Canon of Carlisle, says :

G. H. W. was, I think, always a solemn-looking boy at school, but his smile was always the same—a very winning smile. His nickname at school was ' Daddy '—always ' Daddy ' or ' Daddy Wilkinson '—and when his younger brother came to school, whom I saw more of, he was at once called ' Young Daddy.'

This last reminiscence is confirmed by other testimony.

Mr. Ralph Dalyell writes :

At Durham Grammar School they had a rather horrible custom of what was called ' bumping ' the new boys on the stone flags in a sort of big arcade between the school and the head-master's house. I had just been collared by some half dozen ' old ' boys, and taken by the heels and the head, and was about to be bumped, when up ran Wilkinson and shouted, ' Let that boy alone ; he's a delicate little chap, and you sha'n't bump him.' So I got off, and more or less worshipped my rescuer for ever after.

Another schoolfellow, who both joined and left the school at the same time as George Wilkinson, remembers how they signalised themselves, on their first entering the school, by fighting one another for a whole hour in the churchyard of the cathedral, which was then the playground of the school. The quarrel was not of George's making, and it was considered, with some justice, a mark of pluck and perseverance, that two little boys of eight should maintain a combat for so long.

In October 1851 George Wilkinson went up to Brasenose College, Oxford. His father had wished him to enter the newly founded university of Durham—partly perhaps to have him nearer home; but his step-mother—for Mr. Wilkinson had married again—a sensible woman and greatly attached to George, insisted on his being sent to Oxford. His stay at Brasenose was very short. After he had been three weeks in residence, he was elected to a scholarship at Oriel, to which he removed on November 13. His course at the university, as at school, was uneventful. A contemporary of his at Oriel, the Rev. Edward Inman, Prebendary of Salisbury, writes :

His time at Oxford was not distinguished by anything which at all foreshadowed his future career. Oriel was then under the rule of Dr. Hawkins—a very repressive rule, in no way encouraging to the individual powers and aspirations of those he governed. Wilkinson lived a quiet and unnoticed life, but he was good at manly sports. At a time when, owing principally to the Provost's discouragement, Oriel had no eight-oar on the river, Wilkinson rowed stroke (I think) to a four-oar, in which Peile (afterwards Sir James) was captain, and which brought a

good deal of credit to the College. And he caused a great amount of astonishment by winning the college 'grind' or steeplechase. For Oriel had a great number of riding men, and he had never been seen on horseback in Oxford. Probably this and many other abstentions from hospitalities and social enjoyments were due to a necessary and estimable economy. But undoubtedly they prevented his having such influence or winning such affection from his contemporaries as his after life would have led people to expect. I think that perhaps a feeling that he was misunderstood caused a certain shyness and reticence, which he could not shake off till he had felt the warm response to his ministerial efforts.

The steed on which he won the steeplechase deserves to be immortalised. His name was Aynhoe, and one who saw the race describes him as a hired screw. He says that the small and rather fast hunting set then at Oriel were indignant at Wilkinson's success. The recollection of the feat stood him in good stead in later years among some of the men of his congregation in Eaton Square. One man, who himself rode in the race, a great worker at St. Peter's, said that he first came to the church to see if the Vicar could preach as well as he could ride.

The winning of that 'grind' was closely connected with a whole side of the Bishop's life, which must not be left unnoticed. It was, in itself, no inconsiderable achievement, when it is on record that it was won in spite of a broken stirrup—the last mile, after the breaking of the stirrup, down a steep hill, ending with a brook. George Wilkinson had been accustomed to riding from a very early age, having learned to manage a pony when he was four years old. At the age of eight years, riding his pony at home one day, he met a neighbouring gentleman mounted on a fine hunter, and at once challenged him to a race. The handicap was arranged, and the future Bishop won. After he was seventy-four, when the doctors told him that he must give up riding, he did so without a murmur—as he did everything which he saw to be God's will—but he could not do it without a pang. 'You see,' he said to a chaplain, 'I have ridden almost every day of my life, for at least an hour, for seventy years;' but he continued with that smile which his friends knew so

well, 'I suppose you think I have had a fairly good innings.' Riding was his chief recreation in life.

After a great and most successful mission in his Bishop Auckland parish, says the chaplain above mentioned, the Rev. G. W. Borlase, during which he had been most of each day in church and constantly preaching, he told me he jumped on his horse and went as hard as he could across country, jumping hedges and everything. He said that the relief from strain and the pleasure was extraordinary.

Even in his old age he was a fine and fearless horseman.

I remember once, says the same writer, speaking of the Bishop's life at Perth, when we had taken out two new horses, which proved to be only half broken, how well he managed. Both our horses were badly frightened by a train, and I remember catching a glimpse out of the corner of my eye of the Primus sitting down as firm as a rock, while his horse was bucking and plunging in a way that would have unseated many younger men.

He was as free from vanity of any sort as a man can well be; but it is said that no criticism of his conduct or character ever stung him so much as a statement made by somebody at the time of his consecration that the Bishop of Truro 'had a capital seat, but no hands!'

Probably Mr. Inman has unconsciously exaggerated the degree to which Wilkinson shut himself up from company and amusements during his undergraduate life. His diaries show that during his first term at any rate scarcely a day passed without his going to breakfast or the like with acquaintances old or new, or giving such parties himself. For the later terms the records are less complete. The friends with whom he most often walked and talked, besides Bishop Mitchinson and others of his schoolfellows at Durham, are entered in his diary as Henning, Worthington, Pemberton, Peile (afterwards Sir James), Goschen (the late Lord Goschen), W. St. Aubyn, Izaak, Inman (already mentioned), Court, Mount, Beaumont, Hankey. He always spoke of his Oxford days as a time of much enjoyment, and told many tales of his experiences with hacks in cross-country rides. He had a good allowance, besides his scholarship. But he had

already laid down strict rules for the guidance of his action. On the second Sunday that he was at Oxford he had occasion to consider whether he would go to a friend's after hall, and refused. He notes in his diary, 'Remark that while doubting about Sunday parties, both my evening pieces were strong against seeking men's favour.' Every week he drew up a table of what he had read. His accounts were scrupulously kept.

It is not easy to make out what effect his university course had upon his religious principles. 'Oxford in my day,' he said in later years, 'was in the way of religious life at a very low ebb. It was suffering from the reaction of Newman's secession to Rome.' It has been surmised that he came at Oriel under the influence of Charles Marriott, one of the best and wisest of the Tractarians; but of such influence there is no trace in his diaries at the time, nor is he known to have spoken of it afterwards. Tractarianism left him untouched at Oxford. The only 'don' who seems to have taken any particular interest in him was Adam Farrar, afterwards Canon and Professor at Durham, whose lectures he attended, and whose guidance in his reading was useful and stimulating. The Provost he found 'unpleasantly rude,' until after he had taken his degree, when the sudden change of manner struck him almost as disagreeably. 'Chapel,' 'Chapel,' 'Chapel' is set down every day in his diary. The tale which is told of another Oriel Bishop might perhaps have been true of him, that the Provost, having no other fault to find with him, took exception to his regularity at chapel, and warned him to beware of formalism. He always attended the university sermon on Sundays, and wrote out notes of what he had heard.

CHAPTER II

TRAVEL

It was a disappointment to Mr. Elder when Wilkinson in his Final Schools was only placed in the Second Class. His health had not been good; and diligent and dutiful as he was, his was not quite the nature of the scholar. A good and well deserved holiday followed his efforts. His home was at all times a place of fun and high spirits, where shooting, riding, balls and parties were continually going on. His father, on his return from Oxford, made him a present of a pack of beagles, and with these and much cheerful society he solaced himself for any chagrin that he may have felt at his degree. Visits to the cathedral service were frequent.

But he was soon to enjoy a much greater and more effectual solace. His uncle Tom, who had no children of his own, had always taken a father's interest in the boy. He now gave him a blank cheque to take a year of foreign travel and sojourn wherever he liked. Starting early in November 1855, he went to Marseilles and Nice; thence drove along the famous road to Genoa, and then on—by carriage all the way—through Carrara, Pisa, and Florence to Rome, which he reached in the middle of December.

He felt all the due excitement and enthusiasm as he approached the city. 'After leaving Baccano, a little village on the road,' he wrote to his father,

I left the carriage for some miles, and went to the top of a hill by the roadside. The long range of the Campagna extended before me, girt by its amphitheatre of mountains. In the distance were a few trees and some scattered houses, and amongst them seemed to arise a large dome. I sung out to a peasant, 'Is that St. Peter's?' and his answer told me that I was really

within sight of Rome. I never knew before the feeling which others have described with reference to similar scenes.

When you get to Baccano, he wrote to his uncle, and know that you will soon see St. Peter's, all the excitement of old associations comes with redoubled force. I left them all in the carriage two or three miles from the place and hurried on to the top of the hill. There it was—the grand Dome as clearly seen as if it were only six or seven miles distant. . . . As to Rome itself it is only now that I can feel that I really am here. The first two days all was misty, and one felt in a sort of dream.

In Rome he stayed for three or four eventful months, until the beginning of April. At every stage of his journey, in Rome itself, and afterwards, he wrote constantly to his father and stepmother, and generally to his uncle as well. His father had been a traveller himself on a small scale, and had written accounts of his adventures for the amusement of his little boy, when he should be old enough to read them. George now repaid the debt. He was a good and thorough sightseer, and well enough acquainted with the classics and with history to enter with interest into the varied associations which surrounded him. He sent his father elaborate descriptions of the scenery through which he passed, and of the places which he visited, and of everything that he saw. Mr. Wilkinson, proud and delighted, was none the less unsparing of criticism upon his son's productions. At one time George's letter is illegible ; another time full of mistakes ; at another he does not state with sufficient exactness what he did on what day ; at another he is taken to task for not giving an account of the prices of things in Italy ; at another it is hinted that he is ' slightly deranged.' These strictures he bore very good-humouredly ; he altered the form of his letters to that of a regular diary ; he devoted a whole letter to commercial details ; he endeavoured to reform his writing and to eschew blunders. But he was evidently hurt by one reflexion. He writes to his uncle :

Many thanks for giving me a hint about writing home. I think, however, that my Father is a little mistaken. I have written once every week, and sometimes oftener. . . . I love

them all far too dearly not to feel it one of my greatest pleasures to write to them ; and am on that account the more disappointed that my letters have not arrived as often as he wished.

The complaint was not repeated.

His uncle provided him with introductions to various people at Rome, especially to Mr. and Mrs. Goode. They were very wealthy people, and lived in the best society of the place, and through them Wilkinson was admitted everywhere.

The various objects for which people come to Rome, he writes, are very amusing. Some hunt, some shoot, some dance, some lionise, some run about to ceremonies, some go twice a day to our own church, some read novels, some do nothing. For myself of course my object is lionising. I find it, however, a very pleasant change to go in for an hour or two to a dance once or twice a week and have a little ladies' society. My Uncle's introductions have procured me as many acquaintances as I wish, and every day increases their number. The Roman etiquette is rather curious. If you are introduced to a married lady, you are expected to leave your card next day. After that she invites you to her parties. Thus with one or two, with whom to commence, the circle soon enlarges. The Macbeans have introduced me to some English families. Mr. Goode has promised to take me with him to any of the receptions of the Princess Doria, &c., which may take place while I am in Rome. . . . I hope that you will not infer from what I have said that I allow anything to interfere with my sightseeing. I may be rather weak, but I am not so foolish as to waste an opportunity to which I have looked forward for the last five years.

He was fortunate in the company that he met at Rome.

There are some very nice fellows, he says, staying in the Hotel, and we have a portion of the *table d'hôte* to ourselves, and are in every respect as happy as any set of men could possibly be.

You ask me, he says in a later letter to his uncle, who my friends at the *Angleterre* are. They are mostly Oxford and Cambridge men, but I do not think you know any of their belongings. There is Blandford and Lloyd for Oxford. The latter is in the army, and hoping soon to go to the Crimea. From Cambridge we have one of the Yorkshire Johnstones, and Dennis. Besides these there is a man of the name of

Murray, a Scotchman; Macleod, brother of the famous Presbyterian clergyman, also a Scotchman; and Cole, an old guardsman.

With Donald Macleod—a name as famous now as that of his brother Norman—a friendship was formed which lasted to the end. 'We literally jumped into friendship,' Dr. Macleod said.

I am indebted to Dr. Macleod for the following reminiscences of the period:

It was in December 1855 that I first made the acquaintance of Bishop Wilkinson. We were both staying in the Hotel d'Angleterre, Rome, and one afternoon when I was hurrying upstairs I was stopped by a stranger saying, 'May I ask if you are any relative of Norman Macleod who wrote "The Earnest Student"'? When I told him I was his brother he grasped my hand and asked me to his room. That was the beginning of a friendship which lasted till his death, and remains one of my most precious possessions. From that hour we were inseparable during our stay in Rome, and when I recall what he was then I can testify that he was the same fascinating, holy and consecrated soul which he was to the end—not so much the ecclesiastic perhaps as he became later on, but the same prayerful, loving and delightful personality. We understood one another thoroughly, and although I was entering the ministry of the Church of Scotland, and was a Presbyterian, we had no controversial discussions. We went to church together and took Holy Communion together, and sometimes exchanged a smile when the then incumbent of the Anglican Chapel indulged, *more suo*, in attacks on the supposed errors of Presbyterianism, as an alternative to his expositions of the errors of Romanism. Our fellowship was founded on something deeper, and our mutual confidence and affection could not be shaken by such disquisitions. There were many interesting people then in Rome, for the stream of converts from Anglicanism was at its fullest. Several clerical and other guests living in the Hotel became, like the late Prebendary Stooks, our close friends in after years.

He and I went various expeditions together. One memorable day we walked across the Campagna to the ruins of ancient Veii. I believe we talked incessantly from start to finish, for the day was glorious and our spirits high. We started so

early that the sun rose as we crossed the Ponte Molle. We steered our way across the sea-like Campagna by means of a pocket compass, our hearts bubbling over with youthful enthusiasm.

Another splendid expedition was from Tivoli to Licenza—the ancient Digentia, near which lay Horace's Sabine Farm—the exact site of which is, as usual, contested by modern critics, but we were content to accept the traditional spot near Licenza. We went the whole distance on foot, and what a day of beauty it was! I remember how at one point we came to a *capanna di paglia*—a hut of straw used for shelter from sun and shower, and discovered a shepherd inside who invited us to join him. It was with difficulty we did so, crawling in on all fours till we found ourselves stretched beside the sun-tanned *contadino* in his rough sheep-skin. Wilkinson and he in a short time became involved in a religious talk, and it was at once beautiful and not without a touch of the ludicrous, that whenever the name of our Lord occurred, Wilkinson, whose head, even when recumbent, was within a few inches of the straw thatch, struggled up on his elbow to take off his cap. It was characteristic of his simple and deeply reverent nature. We then pushed on to Licenza, but when we reached the hamlet with its little church a new difficulty arose, for there was neither *trattoria* nor *osteria* to which a traveller could go for food or shelter; but when we made known our difficulty to the *custode* of the church, he politely invited us to his own house. So we followed him with our knapsacks into a clean kitchen, through which we reached a bedroom with a four-poster, where we placed our knapsacks and proceeded in search of the reputed site of Horace's farm. When we returned tired and hungry we found the wife of the *custode* preparing supper for us, consisting of *presciutto*—very thin slices of ham, through which a wooden skewer was passed and turned before the embers. This, with a crust of bread and a cup of watery coffee, constituted our unsatisfying repast, for we were very hungry. Supper over we retired to sleep together in the high bed, which we did as soundly as the squealing and kicking of the mules in the stable below permitted. We rose very early, and in the morning light discovered that all round the room, resting on the floor and piled against the walls, was a number of oil paintings. I have often wondered what they were—possibly of value, placed there for safety. Our breakfast consisted of a small fragment of the brown

bread of the previous evening and another small cup of coffee, and with this meagre refreshment we started for our long walk over Monte Gennaro to the Campagna and the subsequent road to Rome. The walk up the mountain in the morning air was unspeakably delightful, and the view from the summit magnificent, from which the descent on the other side formed a pleasing change after the long arduous climb. It was long after midday when we reached the Campagna, and the want of food, combined with fatigue, began to tell on us, and as a farmhouse was in sight it was arranged that we should, turn about, make an attempt to get bread. So it fell to me to make a diversion towards a gaunt, empty-looking edifice about half a mile away! As I approached, a window was suddenly thrown up, and a roughly clad form and unkempt head were thrust out and a gun pointed threateningly in my direction. I explained my errand in as touching a way as any beggar to the manner born could have done, but all I received was a gruff order to be off, as he was a guardian and had no bread to give. When I joined Wilkinson I found he had discovered within sight a shepherd with a huge Campagna dog, to whom we went. As we described how we had come from Licenza over the top of Monte Gennaro, he responded with an admiring 'Corpo di Bacco,' and at once produced a goodly piece of black bread which we devoured greedily, and on our presenting a handsome 'tip' he gave us a hearty *addio* and loving hand-shaking—'Sopra Monte Gennaro! Corpo di Bacco!' We were still about sixteen miles from Rome, but fortunately we had not proceeded far on the road when a broken-down, ancient country diligence overtook us, so that we got home without fatigue.

There was another incident which he and I often recalled in after years. On a splendid moonlight night we went out for a stroll in Rome. Past midnight we reached the Colosseum, when suddenly out of the shadow there came the *Qui vive?* of a French soldier and the clash of steel as he brought his rifle to bear on us. In the ghost-like silence it did startle us, but we were kindly permitted to enter the amphitheatre, so huge, silent and impressive in the moonlight, and soon our fancies repeopled the scene with the crowds tier above tier, and below the awful martyrdoms. Then wandering about the Forum we came to a halt at a spot where we had a wider view of the ruins and the Via Sacra. For a time we spoke not, for we were awed by the stillness. At last Wilkinson in his low, sympathetic

voice said ' How easy it is in such an hour to realise the Rome of the past, when these temples were in their glory ! ' Then we thought of St. Paul coming to the mighty city in loneliness and ' not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, believing it was the power of God unto salvation.' We felt it all as we never did before. But that night had another and very different experience in store, for as we were returning through the empty Corso we discovered a café open. On entering we found a number of Italians listening with eager faces to an *Improvvisatore*, who with vivid gesticulations was half reciting, half singing some story. We were so fascinated by the scene in the half-lit room, by the picturesqueness of the excited *Improvvisatore* and the novelty of the surroundings, that often in later years Wilkinson would say ' Do you remember that night with the *Improvvisatore* ? '

I have another recollection. I had formed a friendship with the Vice-Principal of the English Roman Catholic College, who had been a Rugby boy, and was by birth a Scotsman. He and I arranged to walk out together on two days in each week, and Wilkinson often accompanied us. Our conversation purposely turned on religious questions, especially on the matters which divided the Roman Catholic and Reformed Churches. As far as I recollect, Wilkinson did not take a very active part in our discussions, for his strong side was not the theological, but I am sure we both found it most instructive and interesting to talk over these matters with a cultured priest who could discuss differences without loss of temper. I believe that Wilkinson as well as myself learned much from him as to the better side of Romanism, and while remaining unshaken in our convictions, yet we gained an insight into the power which the things we rejected might have over the mind of another.

During those months at Rome, Wilkinson's uncle sent him an extra present of 50*l.*, to enable him to keep a horse, or indeed two horses, for his own use. When the Carnival came, Wilkinson threw himself with great ardour into the fun.

I had ample accommodation, he writes to his uncle, as several of my lady friends had balconies which I visited in succession. Nothing can ever do justice to the excitement of the *Moccolletti* evening. One moment everybody was jumping after everybody's candle. At another we were all in utter

darkness, accidentally tumbling into each other's arms. Now all balls are over, and we all agree that dancing is vanity, and wonder how any rational person can enjoy so foolish an amusement. We, sensible people as we are, go to tea in an evening, and talk scandal about our neighbours, and retire to bed at an early hour.

His letters of the period do not mention one acquaintance made at Rome. Dr. Macleod writes :

On our return [from Licenza] we found the Carnival still in full swing, and next day entered into the fun of it with *abandon*. I mention this because on the last day of the festival, when Wilkinson was not with me, my companion and I agreed that the prettiest girl we had seen was a fair English one on a balcony who cheerily returned our fire of *confetti*. Great was my surprise when a year or two afterwards I was introduced to this same girl as Mrs. Wilkinson, the beautiful and most sympathetic wife of my dear friend, whose premature death was so widely lamented.

That English girl was Caroline Charlotte, eldest daughter of Lieut.-Colonel Benfield Des Vœux, who was spending the winter at Rome with her aunt, Lady Grey, widow of General the Hon. Sir Henry Grey, G.C.B. In one of his letters to his father, Wilkinson says, describing the manners of the Carnival :

All the young men take this opportunity of presenting their lady friends with bouquets and fancy articles full of bon-bons. To manage this part of the amusement you generally go on foot, and when you arrive at the balcony where the dear charmer is visible, you stop and send up your bouquet. She of course responds with a smile, and you put up your mask again and proceed on your way delighted.

Whether this little ceremony took place under Lady Grey's window is not stated, but certainly before Lent ended Wilkinson and Miss Des Vœux had become fast friends. He used to say that if it had not been for those two horses of his, the stern aunt would not have allowed him so ready an access to her beautiful charge. However the acquaintance began, it soon ripened, and deepened. They had long talks on theological as well as

other subjects; and one of the things which most impressed Miss Des Vœux was that on Easter Even, when all were discussing their plans for the next day, and one said that he was going to see the service at St. Peter's, and another at the Gesù, and another something else, George Wilkinson said quietly that he was going to the English church to make his Communion. She had been noticing his ways already. She told one of her daughters that what first attracted her in Rome was his way of walking home after Holy Communion in the early morning.

He left Rome with deep regret. He did not tell even his uncle one cause of his regret, in parting from his new attachment; but he wrote:

If you knew how I had enjoyed myself in Rome, you would rather wonder at my being able to tear myself away from it than at my having dallied in it so long. Rome has indeed been an *alma mater* to me, and opened my mind to the appreciation of all that is beautiful in art or venerable in antiquity. I really think that a couple of months here has done more for me than a year in Oxford.

The original project of the tour had been that after his stay at Rome he should go on to Constantinople, and so to the Crimea, where his younger brother was serving with his regiment, the 82nd. Everyone told him that the season was inopportune for visiting the Crimea, and he made up his mind, encouraged by his uncle's generosity, to go to the Holy Land.

He drove by Terracina to Naples, where he spent some delightful weeks, and then took ship to Malta and Alexandria, and thence to Jaffa. He reached Jerusalem on May 5. He saw all the usual places of pilgrimage, and penetrated into the Moabite country beyond the Jordan, and so through Perea to the Lake of Tiberias and Nazareth, returning to Jerusalem through Samaria. From Jerusalem he went by Sharon and Carmel to Damascus and Lebanon, and so down to Beyrut. On this northern journey he was alone with his dragoman and attendants, and greatly enjoyed the freedom which it gave him.

Here are a few extracts from his journal letters from Palestine. One day he writes from Jerusalem:

On my way back from Gethsemane to the hotel, I strolled through the streets, and by chance entered the enclosure of the sacred Mosque of Omar, occupying the site of the ancient Temple. In a moment all the Turks rushed after me with a loud roar, and gave chase, as I set off full speed. Six years ago they would have torn any one to pieces who committed a similar profanation; and now it is considered very dangerous to approach, especially when fast time has rendered them more than usually fanatical.

On Wednesday, May 28, he writes, came . . . the crossing of the Jordan. I wish that I could give you an idea of this striking scene. Our numbers had by this time increased to about forty. The sun had just risen and was dispersing the mists from the Jordan. All was life and animation. Here were half a dozen wild Arabs swimming about as if the water were their native element. There a couple of them were supporting a mule, as it tried to cross with its heavy burden. Here a sheep was carried away by the current, there a goat was borne across on the back of an Arab horse. It was a picture worthy of a Landseer. After ascending a low range of hills, and leaving the bed of the Jordan, we came into the plains of Moab. The people around us were busily engaged in their harvest. This is very abundant where the land is cultivated. When the district which any tribe have sown is ready for the harvest, they bring their black tents, and remain till the grain has been gathered. Some are busy cutting the crops; others are driving the oxen who tread out the ears. Others, again, are throwing the corn into the air, that the chaff may be carried away and the grain remain. On all sides are every description of bird, partridges and doves, pigeons and thrushes, while here and there a timid gazelle is seen in the distance.

At Sumiak the road was lined with tombs, like the Via Appia at Rome. Let me not, however, mislead you when I talk of roads. A mountain path is the most which you ever find, and not unfrequently you pass straight through a cornfield, regardless of the damage which may be done to the crop. Near Sumiak was an encampment of Bedouins, who all flocked to see the *Howadjees* (Messieurs). The women with their tattooed faces, the men with their sack-like robes, afforded us as much amusement as we evidently gave to them. They examined everything with the greatest curiosity, and could not understand the needles and thread and other mysteries

of Mrs. Watkin's workbox. My revolver, the 'six spirited thing' as they called it, was their greatest object of reverence, and their anxiety to obtain possession of it was most amusing.

Monday, June 2.—Nothing could be more beautiful than our camping ground at Jerash. All around us were the most splendid wild oleanders which I ever saw. From twenty to thirty feet in height, and covered with bloom, they presented a most striking appearance, which was still more remarkable from its contrast to the old ruins with which Jerash abounds. The quantity of Roman remains in this place are most remarkable. There are from one to two hundred columns still standing —theatres, porticoes, bridges, temples, circus—in fact everything which the most luxurious city could require. It is situated on the brow of two hills, with a stream running through it, whose bed is covered with the oleanders which I have mentioned. It is under the protection of a little dwarf sheikh, not more than three feet in height, who summons at will 500 Arabs. We went to coffee at his tent in the evening.

At Tyre, on June 22 :

In the evening, as I was going to bed, Petrus appeared, to say that a party of the chief ladies of the city had come to see my tent, having been too shy to do so during daylight. Of course we did the honours to the best of our ability. Some Naples soap which was discovered gave great satisfaction. A small bottle of *vinaigre de toilette* was considered very nasty. So much for taste.

Stopping to breakfast [the next day, near Nabathæa] under a wide spreading fig tree, all the neighbouring village conceived the idea that I understood medicine. Hence all the invalids of the village made their appearance to be doctored. Here was a woman with incipient fever, and there was a girl with confirmed rheumatism. Here was a child who could not sleep, and there was a man who could not walk. This person had a bad leg, and that one had a sore back. In fact every malady was represented in our House of Medicine. Some fever-powder for the old woman, and a bilious prescription for one of the boys, was as much as I could venture to quack them. At Nabathæa we had a levy of all the Roman Catholics, who, knowing no difference of belief except Christian and not Christian, came to converse with their English brother. Except that they brought a large company of Christian fleas with them, they were pleasant

fellows enough, full of pride in the cross which was painted over their door.

On July 8 he sailed from Beyrut, in terrific heat, and reached Constantinople on July 17. There he had hoped to meet his brother, but was disappointed.

On arriving here, he says, I met with the only pieces of bad luck which I have had for an age. The first was that Harry had left four days before my arrival. I had begged him to write to me at Jerusalem and at Beyrut. He only wrote to me at the latter place, and in his letter expressed the probability of their staying some time longer. However, it was nobody's fault, as no one expected that the Crimea would be so soon evacuated.

I hope, he says in the same letter, you will let me have a chat with you before you decide on sending Polly to finish her education in Paris. In spite of its advantages, there is much to be well considered before coming to such a decision. For the last three Sundays I have not been within 100 miles of a church. In fact, with the exception of Jerusalem and Jaffa, there is no English Church in Palestine. When I was travelling with the Watkins, we used to have service in our tents, and were literally 'two or three.'

Athens was the next stopping place, where he arrived on August 13. September 1 found him at Venice, whence he writes in a postscript to his father 'I wish that I were with you for a morning in the stubbles.' From Milan he made a tour of the Lakes, and then turned south again to Florence and other cities. On October 1 he writes to his uncle from Florence: 'In spite of the Dean's last advice to stay abroad for three years more, my tour is coming to a close, and I am winging my flight homewards.' He visited his uncle in Paris on the way, and wrote to him afterwards from Boulogne:

As my mind runs over the scenes which I have visited . . . I feel as if all were some delightful dream instead of a real tour. One thing connected with it at any rate is real, namely, thanks to those who gave me so great a pleasure. You saw yourself how fully I appreciated it, so there is no occasion to say more.

One thing I can say, that of all my tour no part will afford me more pleasant recollections than the last week. Much as I have always enjoyed being with you, I never paid you so pleasant a visit as the one which is just over. I don't know how it was, but we never before seemed so like two brothers, talking over things which were of equal interest to both. It was a week to which I had looked forward amid many a strange scene and in many a barbarian land. It is one to which I shall look back in many a future year, as the happy conclusion of the happiest twelve months which I have ever spent. God bless you both, my dear Uncle and Aunt.

To the Rev. T. Wilkinson

Oswald House, Tuesday, Oct. 28 [1856].

My dear Uncle,—I arrived here last night. To begin with my mother, she is looking better than I had hoped to find her, and the substitute makes the loss of her beautiful black hair not so conspicuous as I feared that it would be. As to spirits, the arrival of her lads has so brisked her up that she is quite herself in that respect. She sends her very kindest love to Aunt and to yourself.

As to Harry, he is nearly an inch taller than when I last saw him, is just sufficiently browned to show that he has been in the Crimea, and altogether looking very well and handsome. An incipient moustache rather looks as if it could not help it. Mine made him so envious that I had no peace till it was shaved.

Mary is grown very much and improved. My Father just the same both in appearance and in spirits.

It is very pleasant to be all together once more after our long separation, and to talk over the events of a year which to us all has been so important. . . .

For myself I cannot tell you how delighted I feel that my year with all its enjoyments is safe, is mine. Often I shut my eyes and carry my mind to the wide plains of Syria, or the deep valleys which surround Jerusalem. Write to me now and then, my dear Uncle, and keep up the remembrance of old Italy. Ask me if I have forgotten the orange groves of Sorrento, or if Venice has glided from my memory like one of its own gondolas. . . . Never can I thank you enough for giving me so great a pleasure—a pleasure not of a year only, but one whose effects must last for life. God bless you both.

To the same

Nov. 9, 1856.

Last Tuesday I dined with the Dean. There was a large party, so he asked me to come again on Thursday. 'Then, said he, 'we shall just have a nice round party of nine, and enjoy ourselves.' . . . Nothing could be kinder than he was, or warmer than his greeting. He was very glad to hear that his brother had been of such use in Naples, and still more gratified that Sir W. Temple's dinner and champagne were (as they really were) inferior to his own.

As to sporting, we had a capital day's shooting on Friday, and on Saturday Harry and I ran all day with the beagles at Kelloe, and then walked home to dinner. So you see, there's life in the old dog yet.

I wish that you could see us all assembled together. One makes a remark which suggests another, and soon Syrian and Crimean remembrances are racing with each other at a great rate. Harry is in every way very much improved, and is as fine manly an officer and high principled a gentleman as you could find anywhere. In fact the old home is more delightful than ever. . . . I manage to get a couple of days a week to pick up my old reading habits.

To the same

Nov. 13, 1856.

One of our Oxford Dons, my old Tutor and the cleverest of his race, was not far wrong, when he said, after reading some sketches of my tour, that it was in every way the most complete and satisfactory that he had ever known. I never can be sufficiently grateful to those who gave me a pleasure which every day makes me appreciate more fully. God bless you, my dear Uncle.

CHAPTER III

MARRIAGE

So far as can be ascertained, Wilkinson's intention to enter Holy Orders had never wavered since his mother's death. In this view of his vocation his father had always encouraged and more than encouraged him. When he returned from his long tour, he discovered that his father was haunted by a fear that he had given up the thought of being ordained. The hair upon his lip, which was his brother's envy, was an outward sign that confirmed his father's fears. He told his daughter long afterwards that as soon as he knew his father's feeling, he said 'You dear Dad, I will take it off at once.' It was his form of receiving the tonsure.

At Marseilles, on his way abroad, he had fallen in with Mr. T. F. Stooks, Prebendary of St. Paul's, and Vicar of St. Anne's, Highgate Rise, the church which was attended by Miss Burdett Coutts. They met again at Cannes and Nice, and made great friends. Mr. Stooks felt that it was a pity that Wilkinson should not have more consecutive study before being ordained, and proposed that on his return he should go and live with him, free of charge, and read for ordination. The project was carried into effect, and soon after Christmas, 1856, Wilkinson took up his abode at Fitzroy Lodge, The Grove, Highgate, to study under Mr. Stooks' direction.

To the Rev. T. Wilkinson

Fitzroy Lodge, Jan. 15, 1857.

The night of the 28th was very wretched. The two months had passed away without a single occurrence to cloud their brightness. We [i.e. his father, his brother, and himself] had been as happy as three lads could be during the whole time.

We had always avoided even the mention of parting, so when the day actually arrived, it was very bad to bear. By dint of talking as much as possible we avoided thinking of it till the fly arrived and we had to say good-bye. It knocked us all up, and sad as every departure from the dear old House has always been, this was the worst. We seemed to have understood each other so well, to be friends in the full sense of the word, instead of merely father and mother and brothers and sisters.

Since I came here I have had one letter from my Father, which is worth more than I can ever tell you. He says that he has seen during the last two months that he has still the two affectionate-hearted lads that he has always gloried in, that he feels it no small blessing that they have returned to him just what he would wish them to be.

Uncle, you know me too well to misunderstand the reason why I quote this. It is a letter of which I am more proud than any other distinction could make me. Though, as some one said in the North, a man must be a doubly distilled villain who would be a bad son to *him*, still it is very nice to find that twenty-three years have produced such a feeling between us.

I am now comfortably settled with Stooks. Nothing can be kinder than he is, and as we live very quietly, I have plenty of time for my Divinity Reading. Farrar, who used to be my private tutor in Oxford, wrote me a very kind letter the other day, giving me a list of books to read, &c.

Now that I am fairly in harness, I find myself able to settle very tolerably. The fact is that I want to be doing something. I have had more pleasure during the last twelve months than my brightest dreams could have anticipated, and now I must try to show that it has not spoilt me, by unfitting me for the work of Life.

To the same

March 14, 1857.

I do not know whether you have followed my example and given up birthdays. At any rate accept my best wishes that you may enjoy very many happy returns of the 16th of March. Every succeeding year has increased our affection for you. . . . For myself I have an especial cause for such feelings, as I owe to you all my happiest remembrances. May your kindness be rewarded by your own happiness, my dear Uncle, and may the best and truest blessings be granted to you. . . .

Mrs. —— used to have Sunday evening teas [at Rome], and

after involving unhappy clergymen in theological discussions, handed them over to Mr. —— for dissection. Of the many acts of kindness which they showed me, the greatest was not sending me invitations for these little entertainments, composed of High Church Fathers, unrelieved by any 'little angels in white muslin.'

I have your 'Papal Principles and Italian Sights.' By the way, an American was introduced the other day to the Prince Massimo. After the usual compliments, he expressed the peculiar pleasure which the introduction had afforded him, since he had that morning visited his magnificent work, the 'Cloaca Massimo!' *Non c'è male.*

Palestine came in very useful the other day. I called on the Bishop to offer myself as a candidate for Trinity Sunday Ordination. By him I was sent to Stanley as examining chaplain. All examination, however, was forgotten when he heard that I had been to 'the mysterious hills beyond the Jordan,' which he had been unable to visit. We discussed his chapter on the subject, and he was much pleased that I was able to testify to its accuracy. I was able also to tell many trifling facts which illustrated the opinions given in his text. It was a very pleasant visit, and I have serious intentions of finding some difficulties as an excuse for visiting him again. It was a real nuisance when at last he said, 'Well, I am afraid that the examination will not entirely turn upon Trans-Jordanic tribes; so we *must* talk of something else.'

Lady Grey had by this time returned with her niece to London. The acquaintance with Wilkinson was renewed. He went often to Seamore Place, Mayfair, and before long—it was on March 21—he asked Miss Des Vœux to be his wife. There was no reluctance on her part to be surmounted—'Well over the first bullfinch,' is the sporting comment in his private diary—but Colonel Des Vœux was not so easily won. Curates were not much in his line. On April 1, while the aunt was holding a consultation in the dining-room whether the marriage was to be allowed or not, Wilkinson and Miss Des Vœux were praying together in the drawing-room. Their prayers gained the day, and the engagement was permitted. Miss Des Vœux soon after went over to France, and Wilkinson, telling the story in later years, said simply, 'I remember well how I felt as I

walked back to Stooks', knowing that she had started. Then I made up my mind to work hard.'

To the Rev. T. Wilkinson

Fitzroy Lodge, March 22, 1857.

I write you a line to tell you how I have employed the last four and twenty hours. I have proposed to Miss Des Vœux, a niece of Lady Grey's, and not been refused. Lady Grey most gladly gives her consent, if my Father and I can scrape up enough to live upon. She, like myself, has no luxurious tastes, so I trust that we may be able to manage.

I have written to ask my Father to come up at once that we may talk matters over. Oh Uncle, it was a proud moment when Lady Grey asked me about my Father and I was able to answer that he was a man whom many loved and all respected. Carsie is twenty-three, and we are just made for each other. I am longing to see my Father. Then, if he can arrange matters for us, you and Billy[1] must come up to town, that we may have a day together before one lad is launched on the sea and another in life. I am either to see or hear from my Father before Wednesday. If he sees any chance of our finding anything to exist upon, we are to be allowed to be engaged. If not, I must try and bear it as I best can, and, by thinking of the happiness which I have hitherto enjoyed in life, to take my share of sorrow. Of that side, however, I dare not think, as I believe that it would drive me mad.

Write me a line by return of post, as, if all has gone on well, I shall not feel happy till I have heard from one whom I love only next to my Father. If things have turned up badly, then I shall have need of a kind word to cheer me up.

God bless you, my dear Uncle. Kind love to Aunt.

From his Father

Oswald House, March 24, 1857.

My very dear George,—I would gladly give you my heartiest congratulations on the prospect you have made for yourself, and come to you at once, but you seem quite to forget that a mere cursory notice of the young lady you hope to have for your wife is all that you have ever given us, and now you wish me to say and do everything with the same 'lovers' speed' that you have yourself shown. You may depend upon it you

[1] A name for his brother Henry.

have taken a most serious step, both on account of the dear girl and yourself, and one that requires me to have a communication with your uncle before I can say a word more than that your selection is *most* acceptable—must be so—I should say *unexceptionable*, unless the High Church notions the ladies of the present day seem to have imbibed may militate against *your* happiness and not contribute to our own.

My own nature, as you well know, is just as impulsive as your own, and without a word of intreaty from you I should have come to you, but as all I can do is as easily said by a letter as if with you, I must allow the three or four days to elapse ere I can be in a position to say all I wish, and in fact what is so absolutely necessary that I should say. Your ideas of economy are exactly those of parties in *desperate love*, and therefore it is very lucky that you have an older head, who began on his 300*l.* a year and acquired some practical knowledge.

The Election here is fixed for Friday, and although my Conservative feelings are at present somewhat in abeyance, I must necessarily be here.

In the interval I shall have a letter from your Uncle, and can then come to you immediately. I assure you, my dear lad, that it is indeed a practical lesson to me of self-denial in not starting off at once. I have not the least fear of approving your choice. As to your Mamma, she is just as happy and busy about it as if it *were her own case*, and Mary's state may be imagined—no description would be of any service.

Trusting that you will see the necessity for *Business and Affection* to go hand in hand in such an important matter as the one I now write about—and with every good wish to you and her so dear to you—

Always your truly affectionate Father,
GEORGE WILKINSON.

To the Hon. Lady Grey

March 25, 1857.

MY DEAR LADY GREY,—I enclose you a letter which I received from my Father this morning.

I should therefore ask you to write to Col. Des Vœux and request his consent to our engagement. We shall have, I am afraid, very little with which to begin. You will see, however, from my Father's letter that he will do everything in his power for us.

As if to encourage us, I have this morning been almost promised a curacy under Archdeacon Sinclair at Kensington, which in every way is not only desirable, but more than I could possibly have hoped. My Father is coming up to town on Saturday. If, therefore, it were convenient to Col. Des Vœux I should propose that my Father and myself should either meet him in town, or if more convenient to him, that we should call upon him in Boulogne.

I am well aware that I cannot offer Car a position which is in any way worthy of her. You will, however, not misunderstand me, when I say that I am able, at any rate, to offer her a name which for several generations has remained unsullied.

I fully agree with you in the propriety of my not again coming to Seamore Place till you have heard from Col. Des Vœux. For Car's sake, no less than for my own, I should wish it to be so. I hope, however, that Col. Des Vœux will think of his own early life, and will not delay his answer longer than necessary.

Ever, my dear Lady Grey,
Most truly yours,
G. Howard Wilkinson.

To the Rev. T. Wilkinson

[Without date.]

I have been hoping every day for a line from you both, even though it were to condemn my 'pairing off' so early in the day.

Now that my Father has told you all, do give me a line, and we will never do so again. If you had only seen her, I am sure that you would both be delighted with her.

I have had such kind letters from my Mother, Mary and Harry.

My Father has seen and thoroughly approved of my choice of one who is likely to be to me in very truth a helpmeet.

Now do give me a line, my dear Uncle, as I do not think that you could have refrained from doing so if you had known how much I love you. Do let me have a line from you both, and

Believe me to remain,
Ever your affectionate Nephew,
G. Howard Wilkinson.

To the same

Fitzroy Lodge, April 11, 1857.

My dear Uncle,—As you do not yet know Caroline, I am not surprised at your considering me a fool. I am well aware that in many things I have acted so as to deserve that appellation. When, however, you know Caroline, you will not class my engagement amongst them. One of my best friends, who knew her well, said that he had never known any girl whose high principle, quiet tastes, and merry temper so fitted her to be a helpmeet for a hard-working curate. If, therefore, I am a fool, there are some who are involved in the same mistake.

Enough, however, of that. Many thanks to you, my dear Uncle, for writing so kindly on the subject. The very fact of your considering me foolish in forming an engagement makes me feel your kindness in saying nothing against it in your letter. I am quite content to leave it as it is till you have seen us tried. We are prepared for much which may be rough. The hard work of life is really beginning, and the holidays are over. There will be some little luxuries to be abandoned, and some, possibly many, difficulties to be grappled with. We have, however, set sail with a full consciousness of what is in store for us, and if at the end of our lives we are able to feel that we have done a stroke of work in our generation, we shall be content.

For Caroline I have no fear. She has during her whole life been so accustomed to self-denial that it has become habitual to her. For myself it will at first be difficult, as, thanks to your kindness and that of my dear Father, I have during life had everything which I could possibly desire. I have, however, the highest motives to urge me on. I have to show myself worthy of her who has promised to be my wife. I have to prove to my Father and to yourself that all your kindness has not unfitted me for a quiet curate's life.

I have made all arrangements with Archdeacon Sinclair. He gives me 100*l.*, having never given any previous curate more than 80 for his first year. Stanley is examining chaplain to the Bishop of London. . . .

The boys in my school class are so surprised when I say, 'I was in Bethlehem just this time last year.'

I am practising my reading and my sermon-writing.

I am very sorry that your cold is no better, and that Aunt

is unwell. Give her my very kind love and believe that whether he be married or unmarried nothing can alter the affection of

Your 'foolish' Nephew,
G. H. WILKINSON.

To this letter is prefixed the significant little postscript :—

'When was your wedding day? August 5?'

To the same

16 Lower Phillimore Place, Kensington, W.: June 9, 1857.

Lady Grey asked me last night, when you and Aunt would come and dine with her. I told her that I thought you were very busy all day and preferred going nowhere in an evening. She begged at any rate that I would write and ask you.

Car will be delighted to come with me on Wednesday at 6. They had an awful passage yesterday, but our evening together drove all the remembrance of it away.

I have been busy this morning making the acquaintance of all my district visitors, &c., and have appointed certain times for going round with each of them to see the poor in their respective portions of my district. I am to read the Litany on Wednesday (to-morrow) at 12, and to do the whole duty on Sunday afternoon at 3.30.

Again, my dear Uncle, let me thank you for all your kindness to me. As I have said to my Father, so I say to you. Neither of you can ever know how often the love for you both has urged me on when I was idle, or how often it has come in to keep me straight, when those who had no such ties were led wrong.

God bless you for it and return it to you a hundred fold. With kindest love to Aunt.

To the same

June 18, 1857.

Car has told me this morning that Lady Grey has decided upon having no wedding breakfast on July 14.

We are both much pleased by the decision, as of all social nuisances W.B.'s are the greatest.

We shall thus, please God, be quietly married, and begin our life together with as little humbug as we wish it to be characterised by hereafter.

Such being the case, it will I hope be possible for you to stay in town and see the ceremony performed.

You will have nothing to do but to drive over to Kensington in the morning, stay half an hour, and return to your own abode.

I say nothing about ourselves, as that might be 'pertinacious.' You know, however, how different all would seem to my Father if you were here on the day. As to myself I need not, I hope, say anything. You know full well, my dear Uncle, that there is no one on earth whom I should so much like to have in the church at such a time.

Think it over then, and see if you are not able to manage it. I enclose Stanley's note and the envelope.

They were married on July 14, 1857, at St. Mary Abbots, Kensington, by Archdeacon Sinclair.

To the Rev. T. Wilkinson

Oswald House, Durham: Wednesday July 22 [1857].

My dearest Uncle,—We arrived here last night in a most flourishing state. Nothing could be more successful than our little tour. We were both delighted with the interior of Ely and the exterior of Peterborough. The effect of the sunsets on the grand old Norman columns or the Gothic arches was almost equal to *la bella Italia*, land of the South, inventress of all that is beautiful in Poetry or in Art. So much for sentiment, which for Brides is all very well, but unworthy of Bridegrooms.

While in Ely Cathedral we stumbled upon Stooks and Blandford. You can have no idea how shy they both looked; one examined his boots, another surveyed the wall. Both told us in two minutes that they did not know we were there, and looked as if they would like to say that they would not have come if they had known the awful trial which awaited them. Accordingly we made a point of disturbing them in every possible corner where they had ensconced themselves. One time they were hidden under a screen. Immediately we turned round a corner and said 'Oh! here you are again.' It was quite 'Monsieur Tonson.'

The new screen at Ely, and the mosaic for the floor, is finer than anything which I have seen in England. As for the three arches of the west end of Peterborough, they are really perfect specimens of Early English. I was, however, more greatly surprised with York than with any of the cathedrals. I had

seen it years ago, when I cared nothing for Art or Architecture. I fancied that it was all very well but nothing of any importance, and by no means to be compared with many others which I had seen. When, however, I came there after my year's education in Italy I was quite amazed. We could have never tired of looking at the Decorated window which forms the west end. . . .

We go to an Archery Meeting on Friday, if all be well. I am going to see the Dean this afternoon, and will write you on Saturday. You can have no idea how beautiful the dear old home is looking. Car is enchanted with it. For myself, I can hardly believe that it is the same place. You shall have a full account of it in my Saturday letter.

Meanwhile let me thank you again and again in both our names for your very great kindness to us. I can assure you that we are not ungrateful for it. I can only hope that you may both be rewarded tenfold for it all.

Ever, with kindest love to Aunt Isabella,

Your affectionate Nephew,

G. Howard Wilkinson.

Car's kindest love to her Uncle and Aunt.

SECOND PERIOD

KENSINGTON AND SEAHAM HARBOUR

CHAPTER I

HIS FIRST CURACY

MEANWHILE, on Trinity Sunday, June 7, 1857, Wilkinson had been ordained deacon, in St. Paul's Cathedral, by the Bishop of London, Archibald Campbell Tait; his advancement to the priesthood following on the same Sunday of the year after.

How different my ordination week was to what men have now, he said to one of his daughters. The examination was crowded into one week, and I did not know the result till the Saturday evening, the night before I was ordained. Your Mother waited at Boulogne to know the result, for if I passed, she and her old father were to come over at once. I remember so well, how at the Ordination I was suddenly told by the verger, coming up and bundling on a surplice, that I was to read the Gospel, which showed that I had done well in my examination. That afternoon your mother and I went to St. Mary Abbots, where I was licensed curate. My father made me go up to the lectern to read, to see how my voice carried.

The St. Mary Abbots of those days was not the stately building which has succeeded to the name; but it was one of the most important churches in London, and few of the London clergy were so much respected and looked up to as Archdeacon Sinclair, the vicar, uncle to the present Archdeacon. In this church, Wilkinson preached his first sermon on the Sunday after his ordination, June 14. The sermon was written, and has been preserved. The text was 'When ye pray say "Our Father."' 'I never remember being anxious about my first sermon,' he said, 'but your mother, who sat with her old father

under the pulpit, was terrified.' First sermons are apt to be a little stiff and bookish; but in spite of academic faults, there must have been some in the congregation who caught the main accents of the message which his whole life was to be spent in delivering.

[Christ] told mankind that God was their Father, and that they were His children. They were rebellious, separated from their Father by sin, continually fighting against His mighty arm; yet still they were children. They were prodigals, whose substance was wasted, whose Father was forgotten; yet notwithstanding they were beloved by the Father whom they had dishonoured. He loved them while they were yet in their sins. He wished to bring them back to their long deserted home. He longed to say of each one of them, 'This My son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' . . .

Look at that human relation by which God has chosen to express this great truth. Let us imagine the case of children who have never seen their earthly parent. Educated amongst strangers, living in the country of an enemy, they may have never even heard his name. Yet this ignorance would not destroy their relationship to this unknown father. The fact would remain. Nay, we might even conceive the voice of natural affection to be hushed in these children. We can imagine them too happy in their present life to have any desire to accept their father's invitation or to return to a home of whose pleasures they were ignorant. Still he whose love had been thus manifested would not on account of their ingratitude the less continue to be their father. So is it with ourselves, my brethren, in our relation to God. We may be living under the dominion of His great enemy, the Devil. We may disbelieve the revelation of the Father which Jesus Christ has made. We may resist the Spirit which He has given us and in spite of all our high privileges remain careless or rebellious. Still we cannot cease to be His children. . . .

We see at once that love is the foundation of His government, the principle by which it is regulated. What is the first idea which arises on the name of 'Father' being mentioned in our hearing? Do we picture to ourselves one who is willing to punish or even a person who is strict in the distribution of justice? All these qualities indeed are found in any father who executes aright the solemn trust which has been com-

mitted to him. Yet love is the grand thought which the word itself presents to our mind. So is it in the spiritual kingdom. God indeed is just, and rendereth to every man according to his deeds. He will in no wise clear the guilty. Yet He wishes to be worshipped by us not as the consuming fire, whose fury must be quenched, but as the loving Father, whose arms are extended to receive all who will come to Him through Jesus Christ. It was love which made Him send forth His blessed Son to recall us to our long forgotten home. It is love which permits no past sin, no present unworthiness, to separate Him from His children. It is love which is ever showering fresh mercies upon us, and removes the difficulties which appeared like mountains to obstruct our progress. Even if correction be needed to subdue our stubborn wills, still it is by a Father's hand that the punishment is inflicted. 'Whom the Lord loveth, He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.'

In view of all that the young preacher was himself destined to undergo, there is a deeper pathos in the following passage than perhaps he suspected at the time :

Let us hold fast this our confidence even unto the end, however severe may be the trials by which we are beset. If our favourite plans are thwarted, if that to which we have looked forward for years has been denied to us, if those who were dearer than our own life have been removed from our sight, still let us never forget that it is a Father's love which has inflicted the chastisement upon us. It is He who has stripped us of all our earthly covering, that in our nakedness we might return to Him. It is He who has deprived us of earthly friends, that we might find in Him a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. Yes, let us hold fast this confidence in that trial which is the greatest that God can inflict upon us. When we lose all sense of our Father's presence, when words appear to have no meaning, when religion seems like a dream, when we almost wish that an eternity had never been revealed to us, when in this deep darkness the cry of the Saviour rises to our lips, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' then let the thought that we are God's children be like a star to tell us of the approach of that Sun for whom we are longing. Though we cannot see God, still let us hold fast our confidence in His love. Though the trial be bitter, and bitter, indeed, it is, still let us cry with our

Saviour, 'The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?'

The training of the parochial clergy for their work was not as much studied in those days as it is now. This is Wilkinson's own account of his early ministry.

Archdeacon Sinclair welcomed me. He asked me to dinner once a quarter, but never gave me any training, nor even criticised my sermons. All he did was to take me in a friendly way and introduce me to his District Visitors. I remember how I felt when I was plunged into a District Visitors' meeting and told that I was to take it. I had no teaching or training in my curacy, but had to learn my own experience.

The parish was divided amongst five curates. Each had a division of the parish, and a staff of District Visitors under him. Your mother had had no acquaintance with any clergyman before, so everything was quite new to her. She knew nothing of parish work, but she began at once to take a district with my help.

We had a small house, and Uncle Tom paid the rent. We had one extra room for Aunt Lily.[1] Our house was so small that Aunt Lily had to take off her crinoline in the passage and hang it up. We often went to Aunt Grey's, where we met Lord Halifax, and all the Greys, and many other interesting people. I enjoyed society, but I always took things very much in earnest.

I thought I would start a Cottage Meeting. Your mother and I found a most suitable room in John Scott's house. We thought no one would come, but to our astonishment we found the room full. I remember to this day our terror at starting this. From that time I took it regularly. After this I formed it into a Bible Class, and we decided to move it to the church. The vicar gave me absolute freedom in whatever I liked to start. I had this Bible Class at three o'clock every Sunday, and a large congregation gathered, instead of the very few who came to the ordinary afternoon service.

The District Visitors' meeting aforesaid was certainly a serious ordeal for a young deacon of twenty-three to undertake. The vicar was not often at it, but there was a masterful lady in the parish who had obtained a complete supremacy over

[1] Mrs. Wilkinson's sister.

the organisation. She would say, 'Mr. Wilkinson, you will take the chair,' and then sit down beside him and direct the proceedings.

One of the chief friends whose acquaintance Wilkinson first formed at this period was the Rev. W. D. Maclagan, afterwards Archbishop of York, at that time curate of St. Saviour's, Paddington. The Archbishop writes :

We were not very far from each other, and our casual acquaintance deepened into very close friendship. It was unlike any other friendship that I have ever known. And yet it is not easy to describe the points of difference. Wilkinson was a man with a considerable amount of humour, which he sometimes used, but always with a marked discretion and manifest control. In our ordinary conversation there never seemed any difficulty in passing from lighter topics to more serious subjects. But there was something very striking in the tone which characterised his utterance. The voice in itself was subdued and deepened, and the listener felt conscious of some serious purpose. But with the depth there was at the same time an elevation of the voice along with a remarkable gentleness, and not infrequently what seemed a slight suggestion of pain. This was specially remarkable when in the conversation there was any reference to evil. At such times the utterance became not only more gentle, but even sad. His voice seemed always as if it were uttered in the conscious presence of a higher power, and from a mind almost oppressed by a sense of deep responsibility. I do not think I have ever known any voice with quite the same characteristics. Even now the recollection of it often seems like a beautiful dream.

There was one marked characteristic which was never missing. He was always himself. There was no imitation of any one else. What he said was the honest expression of what he felt, and, in one sense, of what he was.

Another close and valued friend was the Rev. Stopford A. Brooke, who was then beginning to make his powers felt. Mr. Brooke says of him :

Among all the men I have met, he most truly, I felt, believed in God. In that he was like one of the great Jewish Psalmists. Often, as I read the Psalms, I used to hear Wilkinson's voice.

And this was the deep foundation of his intense Christianity. The Old and New Testaments met in him.

I fear I can give you few reminiscences. It is so long ago since we first met, and life and opinion, in later years, divided us from any constant association, but not from friendship. The last time I saw him was at Bournemouth. I was staying at Boscombe and went to see him at the Burlington Hotel. He received me as if we had never parted, and we went over many old times together. He looked delicate, but his face wore the same direct, earnest, impassioned expression, and his eyes changed, as they used to do, from a keen look at the reality of the things discussed, into a sudden far-away vision of that which was beyond the earth. I have often observed these curious changes.

We met first at London House, at the examination for Deacon's Orders. We happened to sit together and talked during the intervals of work, sat together at lunch, were mutually attracted, and resolved to see much of one another. We both married, and we frequently dined at one another's houses. When he left Kensington, he pressed me as curate on Archdeacon Sinclair. I found when I followed him that he had raised the afternoon congregation from the ordinary 80 or 100 to eight hundred, and that it was steadily increasing, so vivid was the impression his passionate lovingness and ability had made. As to the district he served, it was in the best possible order. He was in touch, through the District Visitors he had brought together, with every poor family, and I soon discovered how universally among the poor he was loved and honoured. Nor, when he left, did he forget his people. He often wrote to me about them. . . . I loved the man.

Among Wilkinson's fellow curates at St. Mary Abbots was one for whom he conceived a strong and ardent attachment. This was the Rev. F. R. Chapman, since Archdeacon of Sudbury and Canon of Ely. Mr. Chapman had joined the staff a few weeks before Wilkinson, after two years in what was then the best training ground for an English clergyman, the parish of Leeds, under Dr. Hook. In the uncontrolled freedom which Dr. Sinclair gave to his curates Mr. Chapman had lately started a Shoeblacks' Brigade, and Wilkinson, who was deeply interested in the work, remembered how sometimes he got up at five in

the morning to take prayers for the shoeblacks, and give them their breakfast, as Mr. Chapman did every day. On these occasions Mrs. Wilkinson also would get up at the same hour to make him some coffee. The Cottage Lectures of which Wilkinson spoke were an outcome of the Leeds connexion, for Cottage Lectures were a main part of Dr. Hook's system. Another thing which came from the same quarter was the custom of a weekly holiday. Sunday is no day of rest for the ordinary clergyman, but he needs a day of rest as much as anybody, and Mr. Chapman and his colleague made a point of taking such a day each week, and almost always spent it together. Sometimes they rode together ; sometimes they went to Blackwall, which was then, like Greenwich, a resort for people who like to see shipping and eat whitebait. These were occasions for long and earnest discussions of all questions affecting the inner life and the work of the ministry, and Wilkinson would often say, half in fun, that whatever churchmanship he had, he owed it to Dr. Hook's disciple.

At the time, however, the relationship between the two friends was for the most part, in matters of this kind, one of affectionate and trustful antagonism. They aimed at different things in preaching. Although both were agreed that no Christian life deserved the name which did not involve the conscious experience of inward and spiritual blessings, the one approached the subject from the side of sacramental ordinances and the fellowship of the Church, to the other everything else was subordinate to the bringing of individuals to a knowledge of God and of Christ. To this end Wilkinson devoted all his energies. An old friend, on being asked whether he knew of any crisis that had taken place in Wilkinson's life, answered that the crisis was Wilkinson's first sermon, and that he was his own earliest convert. There is at least this measure of truth in the statement, that from the time of his ordination onwards a new spiritual world lay open to him. He needed no conversion from sin, in the ordinary sense of the word, for he was never under the power of it. He had felt the love of God, so far as can be ascertained, from childhood. The only occasion on

which he is known to have made any reference to a spiritual crisis in his own life was in one of his last sermons at St. Peter's, Eaton Square. Preaching on November 12, 1882, he said :

Is there any one here who has never yet known the happiness of realising that the past is entirely done away with ? Do you say, ' How can I attain this happiness ? ' God leads different souls in different ways. To me it came very quietly : long after I had been enabled to *understand* the Bible in this respect. Long after I had taught other people and brought them into happiness, I myself had no inward rest. I sat quietly in my room, at every spare moment, with my Bible, and I asked God by the Holy Spirit to show me what I have tried to show you this morning—to expound the Bible to me. And, in His great Son, as calmly and quietly as a little child sits when the mother stoops to kiss it, quietly Rest came into my soul, and I realised the power of that which I had understood from my childhood.

This experience, which no one could call a conversion, was evidently much later than his ordination. But with his admission to the ministry came, what cannot be traced before, the yearning for other men's souls, the insatiable desire to impart to them the peace, the hope, the joy in believing, the thirst for God, with which his own soul was filled.

It was not all at once that his evangelistic power was recognised. The Kensington congregation, which was one of the wealthiest in England, was accustomed to a very different style, which it preferred. Archdeacon Sinclair, though in sympathy with the Evangelical party, was not an Evangelical. He was a hard-headed man, whose preaching was addressed rather to the understanding of his hearers than to their hearts. His carefully written discourses were kept and delivered again at intervals of five years, and old attendants at the church knew which to expect, and were disappointed if they did not hear their favourites. Wilkinson's sermons formed the strongest possible contrast. Always in those days written, they were nevertheless marked by the utmost simplicity. People might have said that there was nothing in them, though there was a great deal behind them. Dr. Sinclair himself is said not to

have cared much for them. It was not often that Wilkinson was given the opportunity of preaching to the regular congregation of St. Mary Abbots. His chief duty, as a preacher, was to address the afternoon congregation, which was mainly drawn from a different class of society.

In the summer of 1859 Wilkinson went to Oxford to take his Master's degree, and to show his wife the festivities of Commemoration.

To the Rev. T. Wilkinson

Oxford, June 30, 1859.

I dined the other day with Farrar, my old tutor, and lunched with Chandler, the man I used to read with in Sloane Street, and yesterday we breakfasted with Pinder, whom I read with before the ordination; and for these three friends I have to thank you, my dear Uncle, and your kindness in giving me private tuition. It was everything to me, and the three hours a week of private coaching did me more good than all the College Lectures put together.

There are one or two good stories going about—one is of Sewell, the head of Radley. This Radley is a school near Oxford, where various new theories of education are developed. The following is an instance. Sewell had a very bad boy whom he wished to improve. Accordingly he selected one of his promising pupils and accompanied by the good and the bad boys he started for Oxford. The bad boy was shown round the gaol and left in a dull gloomy room to eat cold meat. The good boy was shown all over Oxford, taken to dine in Hall and allowed to have wine with the Fellows. He did have wine, and did enjoy himself, and the result you can imagine.

He was fond of noting down any stories or witty sayings that he heard—chiefly, it would seem, for the amusement of his uncle.

To the Rev. T. Wilkinson

Sept. 30, 1859.

Did I tell you of my inquiry to the first class of our National School, 'What sect think it wrong to swear in a court of justice?' 'Puseyites' was the answer which after much hesitation I received. As bad as the man who complained that his parson was a terrible Tractarian, because he circulated the Tracts of the Religious Tract Society in the parish.

His curacy at Kensington lasted only a little more than two years. In the late autumn of 1859 Wilkinson received the offer of the vicarage of Seaham Harbour in his native county, and accepted it.

He bade farewell to Kensington on December 11, 1859. On November 30 he wrote to his uncle :

It has been a day of much happiness. First the Vicar spoke so kindly in the vestry before every one (not the curates of course) and said that he had almost had a quarrel with the Bishop of Durham, and had told him that he had taken away one of his best curates. Then when I got home there was a cheque for 25*l.* in behalf of the Industrial, making up the 100 guineas which I wanted. Then there was a splendid timepiece as a present from the Committee of the Girls' Industrial School. Then there was a lovely frock for the boy, worked by the matron and children of the School as a present to dear Cara. Altogether it was too much for me, and I did so wish you had been with me to share our happiness. God bless you both.

To the same

9 Sheffield Terrace, Kensington. [No date.]

I had a very pretty thing in bronze sent me last night from some people here, whom I have seen a good deal of, whose servant I prepared for Confirmation, &c., &c. Also a beautiful case of wax flowers from the pupil teachers, whom I have taken every Sunday morning. I have given up the idea of Christmas Day at the parish church, for reasons which I will explain when we meet. Next Sunday will be my last day there, and very sad it makes me every now and then, happy though I feel in the prospect before me.

To the same

7 Seamore Place : Monday.

After I saw you yesterday, nine volumes of Milman's ' Early and Later Christianity ' were given me by my District Visitors, splendidly bound.

To the same

9 Sheffield Terrace, Kensington : Dec. 11, 1859.

We were so heartily glad to see you in church to-day, but hope you are no worse for it. In spite of its sadness, it has been a happy day. Every one so kind—the Vicar so warm and

almost affectionate to me—in fact everything connected with Kensington forms one long list of reasons for thanking God for His great goodness. He has indeed been most merciful to me.

God bless you, my dearest Uncle. I shrink from the thought of saying good-bye to you. These two years seem to have formed a fresh link between us, which my marriage has cemented instead of weakening. However, I know you will come and see us at Seaham, though you say you will not.

To the same

7 Seamore Place: Dec. 22, 1859.

I have been much unsettled by a letter from Lady Londonderry, asking me to officiate in her chapel at Wynyard on Christmas Day. I have written as strongly as possible to explain how very difficult it would be for me. If, however, she still presses, I must go. The moment I hear I will write, so as to go over and see you before leaving.

My present idea and hope is to be at St. Paul's, Kensington, with Chapman, and I hope most sincerely, my own dear Uncle, you will be there. The poor little wife was very sad at having said good-bye to you. The kindness of Kensington has been overpowering. Above a dozen volumes, besides other things, have been given since I saw you, and to my great pleasure I find that Wright and Pigou joined in giving me the silver inkstand.

To the same

7 Seamore Place, Curzon Street, W.: Dec. 23, 1859.

How strange is life! Yesterday a living of nearly 400*l.* a year in Camden Town was at Stooks' disposal, and would have been mine. It is a clear proof that the North is my proper destination, or it would have come earlier.

To the end of his life Wilkinson kept a sheet of paper, with a print of old Kensington Church at the top, and the names of thirty-six parishioners attached to it, evidently of the humblest class, who desired to give him 'a small token of affectionate gratitude,' as 'humbly trusting they have benefited from his Lectures.'

CHAPTER II

PAROCHIAL WORK AT SEAHAM

The Rev. Charles Green has obliged me with the following account of Wilkinson's ministry at Seaham Harbour.

Mr. Wilkinson's appointment to the Vicarage of Seaham Harbour was due to Frances Anne, Marchioness of Londonderry, who in her day had been one of the most prominent and brilliant members of society. After the death of the Marquis she had devoted herself with conspicuous ability to the development of her colliery property, and also to the Conservative interest in the county, of which Wynyard had always been one of the main supports. It was to this latter connexion without doubt that Mr. Wilkinson, after being little more than two years in Holy Orders, owed his first preferment, for his father, Mr. George Wilkinson, of Oswald House, Durham, was well known as one of Lady Londonderry's most zealous allies, and had rendered services which gave a claim to some substantial recognition. It ought however, to be added that eager politician as Lady Londonderry might be, she was no less conscientious in the exercise of her ecclesiastical patronage, special pains being taken to ascertain her proposed nominee's fitness for the vacant post. It seems to have been the rule in Archdeacon Sinclair's time at Kensington to make one of his staff responsible for the afternoon service in the parish church. Among those who held this appointment, evidently esteemed important and demanding some distinct preaching power, may be mentioned the subject of this biography, Stopford Brooke, and Henry Footman, all of whom afterwards made their mark. To this afternoon service, while held by Wilkinson, officers of the Guards from Knightsbridge are said to have found their way, and thither, by desire of his mother, came Lord Vane to hear and report upon the young curate who was thought of for this parish in the North.

Seaham Harbour was a rather bleakly situated town on the

north-east coast, seven miles south of Sunderland, in the diocese of Durham, with a population at that time of about 6,000, consisting of bottlemakers, ironfounders, miners, seafaring folk and agents of the Londonderry Estate.

For the first year of his incumbency Mr. Wilkinson was all alone, following in this respect his excellent predecessor, the Rev. Angus Bethune, who went to Seaham in 1845, and, as vicar of a neighbouring parish, is still, at upwards of ninety years of age, taking the whole duty unassisted.[1] But his successor at the Harbour was eager for a forward movement, and before long, much to the surprise of those accustomed to the old routine, had the help of a curate [Mr. Green], and afterwards of a second [Mr. Myers]. When I went to him in September 1860, having been ordained on a title he gave me, I found that he had thoroughly gained the affections of the people, for I remember speaking to him in jest on the woe which threatens those of whom 'all men speak well.' Already on every side one saw evidence of quickened religious interest and life. The Sunday congregations had so considerably increased that an enlargement of the church became necessary, and an aisle was being added, giving accommodation for two or three hundred more worshippers. At the same time another decided need was met by the provision of a commodious vicarage, the incumbent having hitherto had no house of residence.

Here at Seaham Harbour was first seen Mr. Wilkinson's singular gift of organisation, the whole parish being mapped out and brought house by house under careful visitation, while an earnest body of teachers was trained for service in the Sunday School. Bible Classes and Cottage Lectures were also started. But perhaps the most noticeable thing was the way in which he got hold of individual souls, leading them on through repentance and a conscious acceptance of the Saviour to a life of Christian devotedness. The names of some of those thus brought to God, Rutherford, Carruthers, Knox, Heppell, Jane Ashworth, Miss Hodge and Miss Irwin, ever and again come up in the correspondence between myself and my dear old vicar to the last decade of his life, just as it was with similar cases connected with our work at Bishop Auckland.

One instance of this was indeed so remarkable as to justify the statement of a few particulars. Soon after my arrival in

[1] Since these words were written Mr. Bethune also has passed away.

Seaham Harbour a little Welsh woman, named Evans, came under Mr. Wilkinson's notice. How she had drifted so far from the Principality and when she had lost her husband I cannot remember, but when found in some common lodging-house her condition was truly pitiable. Drink and outbreaks of temper had made her a general nuisance. But there was something about her that bore evidence of better days. She proved in fact to be a 'backslider,' having not only had deep religious convictions, but made an open profession of godliness. Under Mr. Wilkinson's persistent care she was brought to a sense of sin, and became to all appearance a changed character. So decided, indeed, seemed her interest in spiritual things that it led to her employment as a mission woman in the parish. We were all delighted with her Celtic brightness, and as to her success in bringing people to church and the Cottage Meetings there could be but one opinion. In course of time, however, rumours began to circulate, and on investigation it was found that old drinking habits had regained their hold. Symptoms of delirium tremens showed themselves, and the end of it was that Mrs. Evans had to leave the town.[1] I never saw her again for three and twenty years, and then it was in a little cottage close by Lis Escop, Bishop Wilkinson's residence in Cornwall. All through his time at Auckland, and afterwards in London, in spite of innumerable claims and cares, he had never forgotten that poor, sin-beset woman, nor could he feel satisfied till he had brought her all the way from Wales to Truro, that she might be under his eye and visited continually by some member of his family.

One of Mr. Wilkinson's publications while at St. Peter's, Eaton Square, was entitled 'How to begin a new life.' It consists of instructions given in the parish school room, intended to meet the wants of anxious inquirers after peace with God. The idea, to him, was no novelty, for both at Seaham and at Auckland arousing sermons in church were followed up by plain familiar teaching in the schoolroom, where any one, either before or after the address, might speak to the clergy of spiritual difficulties and receive individual help.

As to the standard of churchmanship, it must be confessed that, from any modern standpoint, there was little to boast of.

[1] Wilkinson told his daughter that Mrs. Evans vowed that if it cost her her life she would shoot him, because he spoke to her of her drinking. Mrs. Wilkinson at one time lived in daily dread that this would happen.

We should certainly not have classed ourselves with 'Evangelicals,' though no one could preach justification by faith and the necessity of conversion more fully than Mr. Wilkinson and his curates. The Prayer Book doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration was not only firmly held, but boldly proclaimed in all its practical bearings from the pulpit. But I cannot remember that any Eucharistic teaching was given beyond the duty of each faithful Christian to obey his Lord's last dying command, 'Do this in remembrance of Me.' Only two celebrations in the month seem to have been attempted, while, led astray by the supposed example of Dr. Hook, the great Vicar of Leeds, an evening Communion was introduced one Good Friday. All the accompaniments of the Sacrament were old-fashioned. The preacher invariably retired to the vestry to exchange surplice for black gown, and of course no one ever thought of either celebrating or reciting the Creeds with his face to the east.

The historical basis for a story which Wilkinson was rather fond of telling, and which another Bishop of Truro before him had been known to make use of, might be found at Seaham Harbour, and being myself the too ambitious preacher referred to in it, I may here record the authentic particulars. Appointed to give a course of week day sermons one Advent, it occurred to me that, having a certain proportion of seagoing population in the parish, it might specially appeal to them if I took St. Paul's voyage and shipwreck as one of my subjects. To make its treatment as full and realistic as possible, I not only read up Conybeare and Howson, together with Jordan Smith's very interesting technical treatise on St. Luke's narrative, but endeavoured to inform myself as to the way in which ancient mariners, prior to the discovery of the compass, managed to direct the course of their ships when out of sight of land. Doubtless the information thus gathered was perfectly correct, though from one cause or another it failed to accomplish its special purpose. The vicar was himself so impressed by the manner in which his curate had risen to the occasion, that, meeting a sailor next day whom he had seen at church, and wishing to establish friendly relations with the man, he exclaimed rather buoyantly, 'Well, that was a grand sermon we had last night,' to receive the very unexpected yet amusing reply, 'It warn't a bad sermon, Sir, but Mr. Green he don't know nought about sailing a ship.'

The preacher at Seaham was never conscious of much to put him on his mettle in the ordinary course of parochial ministra-

tion, though undoubtedly every congregation, even the humblest, will have a countless value in the eyes of him who would win souls for Christ. But twice or thrice a year the large square pew just under the pulpit was filled by the house-party from Seaham Hall, famous for the ill-fated marriage of Lord Byron with Miss Milbank. There might be found, in addition to the always imposing figure of Lady Londonderry, with large Prayer Book in hand (the rather noisy closing of its clasp being the well-understood signal that the discourse had lasted sufficiently long), such notabilities as her sons-in-law, the Duke of Marlborough and Lord Portarlington, Sir Hamilton Seymour, our ambassador at St. Petersburg, whose conversation with the Emperor Nicholas was the first warning note of the Crimean War, Sir Archibald Alison, author of the once very popular History, and the distinguished statesman, Benjamin Disraeli. It was not every sermon that, however within limits as to length, commanded the approval or even tolerance of the great lady from the Hall, for it is on record that more than once she expressed a desire, which was like a 'royal command,' to the vicar that certain members of his staff should not again be allowed to occupy the morning pulpit while she was 'in residence.' Yet it is only right to add that, thorough woman of the world as she had been, and still in old age most imperious and wilful, she was at heart singularly open to better influences. It gave grievous offence to her when Mr. Wilkinson, at the call of his Bishop, decided to leave Seaham Harbour; she never quite forgave him—nevertheless, even while still smarting under a sense of injury and disappointment, she told me that no one had ever touched her so deeply as he. I have always thought of this as most significant, because showing the same kind of power that Mr. Wilkinson afterwards exercised so conspicuously among the greatest of the land at St. Peter's, Eaton Square.

From very childhood the daughter and sole heiress of Sir Harry Vane had been accustomed to rule, and to have every whim indulged. The sense she entertained of her own importance was something hardly credible, and occasionally took forms really comical. The following story I had from Wilkinson himself. There was an Irish colony at Seaham, and the time came when a chapel for them became an urgent need. Application was made to the estate authorities for a site. A good deal of negotiation ensued, the particulars of which, with copy of correspondence, appeared in the local press. It was then found

that a letter from the vicar beginning 'Dear Lady Londonderry,' had been altered to 'Dear Madam!' [1]

Yet even as I write there comes up before my mind's eye a picture of the Marchioness, with sparkling rings thick on every finger, among the approaching communicants one Sunday morning in the church at Seaham, when she quietly drew back to allow precedence to one of our humblest parishioners. 'The root of the matter' was surely there, but its growths had a hard struggle upwards through the superincumbent mass of pride and self-will.

In letters addressed to me by Wilkinson there is a frequently recurring allusion, which arose out of circumstances connected with the termination of our happy work together at Seaham Harbour. Bishop Baring had come to hold (for the first time in the history of the parish) a Confirmation, and in addressing the candidates he gave them as a motto for their future lives the words 'Strangers and pilgrims,' taken from the Epistle for the day, the third Sunday after Easter. We were all deeply impressed by his most appropriate and solemn charge. That night, after evening service, the vicar received the offer of Bishop Auckland. No surprise could be greater, but while very gratifying as a mark of episcopal approval and confidence, it left much perplexity as to what might be the path of duty. Next morning, as soon as his guest was gone, Wilkinson came to tell me the news and to seek counsel. We met in the road near our Mechanics Institute, and there we walked backwards and forwards, discussing the anxious question, which affected us both so closely, as well as the people whose interests we were bound to consider. Whether a decision was reached at once or after further thought and prayer I cannot distinctly recollect. The one certain thing is the fact that, as long as Bishop Wilkinson lived, this Confirmation at Seaham and its associations formed a link between us of the most sacred and affectionate character. No matter where we might be, at home or travelling on the Continent, well or ill 'nigh unto death,' year after year, as often as the third Sunday after Easter came round with its reminder of our condition here on earth as 'Strangers and pilgrims,' we would think of each other in connexion with that never-to-be-forgotten past, and almost as a rule exchanged brief letters of salutation.

[1] For further illustrations of her ladyship's character and autocratic ways see *The Creevey Papers* and Sir John Mowbray's *Recollections of Westminster*.

Here are one or two examples—the last, sent at a time when he was barely returning for a while from the gates of death.

2 Grosvenor Gardens: May 4, 1882.

How I keep thinking of you, dear Green, as I listen to *that* Epistle.

St. Columb, Cornwall: May 4, 1884.

To-day always reminds me in a very special manner of you—especially now, when I have just come in from, myself, confirming a number of adults brought to God at a Church Mission lately held in this parish. It is a strange feeling. That old Institute, and our walk together, and the old Vicarage, and the Bishop, and one who, since our Lord took her to Himself, seems, if possible, nearer and dearer to me.

Cannes: April 22, 1888.

'Strangers and pilgrims' has not failed to remind me of all I owe to you, nor have I forgotten a special prayer for you, my dear old friend and fellow-worker.

Bailey's Hotel, S.W.: April 29, 1907.

He sends you his love and thanks. You will like to know that on that particular Sunday he spoke to me specially about you, saying how closely you were linked in his mind with that date each year.

Another fellow-worker at Seaham Harbour, the Rev. T. Myers, Rector of Twinstead, Essex, writes as follows:

The sphere at Seaham was in a sense only a small and contracted one; no person of any special standing or education above a colliery agent or medical man being in the place.

I think many of the parishioners were puzzled and impressed by finding that a young and vigorous vicar deemed it necessary to have two curates to help him in the services of rather a small church, and this, too, without the slightest desire to save himself.

As time went on it was made more manifest to us all that the vicar's glowing enthusiasm for the religious welfare of all, while it prompted and suggested different little plans, imparted something of a similar spirit to those working with him, not only to his clerical colleagues, but to all teachers or District Visitors.

As to the special features of work in the parish, a great point was made at Communicants' Meetings of attendance at a weekly

evensong without sermon. In Lent a notable service was Litany at 8 A.M. with a short address from the vicar, pointed, earnest and very useful.

There was an annual gathering of Church Workers—a sort of stocktaking at the end of the year—at which summaries of the various departments of the work were given by the clergy and others, and I think all such gatherings got their chief use from the earnest enthusiasm of the vicar, who always threw himself with all his characteristic religious force and sympathy into these occasions.

One most noticeable thing was the warmhearted religious bond between the vicar and his colleagues. I should estimate this as the unique feature of the parish arrangements at Seaham and at Auckland, and afterwards as I saw it at St. Peter's, Eaton Square. All clergy working in the parish met on equality as priests for free prayer, consultation about the work and for its orderly arrangement. Arising out of this there was always an atmosphere of warm, generous brotherliness pervading all intercourse. We all were brought under the genial influence of the vicar, were struck with his high motives and became increasingly impressed by his whole-hearted and single-minded concentration on the best spiritual welfare of all—poor and rich—in the parish.

But though there was the warmth of a religious enthusiast, it never overpowered a very sober, practical judgment on all matters that came up for decision. This was most striking to every one of us. More and more we learnt what an earnest and prayerful spirit marked our vicar ; what toil and pains he took with his ordinary sermons, especially to make them plain and forcible in utterance—all thought of self put aside—in order that they might be used by the Holy Spirit to turn men's souls to God. In all evening sermons, as far as I remember, in church or mission-room—and I often accompanied him at night to an outlying schoolroom—he dwelt with unwearied persistence on some topic bearing directly on conversion, enforced with his characteristic loving earnestness.

At communicant meetings, which I think he generally took himself, his aim was to deepen the religious life and to give plain Church Teaching ; and his regular meetings for Sunday School teachers were highly valued, as he took care to make them a powerful means of educating the teachers in personal religion and churchmanship ; specially was this the case during the Auckland ministry.

I never remember him speaking of any spiritual or ecclesiastical master, or any one at Oxford, Durham, or London, who had left a definite spiritual mark upon him or to whom he owed any special intellectual or religious stimulus. Perhaps afterwards at Auckland he owed as much to Postlethwaite of Coatham as to any one; he used to find much religious refreshment in going to stay a day or two at Coatham; but I should be inclined to say that Goulburn's 'Personal Religion,' to which he introduced us and with which he became acquainted at Auckland, was the book, from its Church tone and its devoutness and earnest evangelistic teaching, that had more influence than anything else upon him.

Many years later Wilkinson described to his daughter the way in which he began his work at Seaham:

First I formed a Bible Class of bottle-makers. They used to come in all hot from the works. We began our meeting with a tallow dip, and after a while we were able to afford a paraffin lamp, till the schoolmaster gave us gas. And in the same way the spiritual work gradually grew. It was an interesting place to begin in, with the pit-men, iron-blasters, and fishermen. Lord Londonderry had—what the people called—'created a harbour,' into which boats could come and take on coal, and import it to other places; so it was a busy place.

On the first Sunday, at the 11 o'clock service, I prepared to take the service, but there was no one in the church. The verger came to me and said 'Never you mind, they will come in gradually;' and, sure enough, he soon came into the vestry and said 'Ye may as well happenon your surplice now; they're coming,' and I found the congregation assembled.

As time went on, I thought I would have a missionary meeting. I planned it out very keenly, put up posters in every direction, and expected great things. After all, only the schoolmaster and his wife and father and mother were present. I made them sit down, and I gave the address, and had all the prayers as if there was a large congregation, and ten shillings was collected.

Some of the leaflets and parochial papers of this time which have been preserved show the principles and methods upon

which Wilkinson worked at Seaham, and it is interesting to compare them with those of a later time.

Seaham Harbour: August 1860.

My Friends and Parishioners,—It is now some time since I first came to live amongst you. Seven months have already passed away since I began, as the messenger of the Lord Jesus Christ, to publish in this place the glad tidings of Salvation—to tell all who were willing to listen of a Father who loves us, a Saviour who died for us, a Holy Spirit who is ready to help us in every time of need.

To a large number I hope that I am no longer a stranger. Yet, when I pass through our streets I cannot help feeling how many are still unknown to me.

It weighs heavily upon me to think that there may be some in sickness or poverty—in trouble either of mind or body—who wish to speak to me as a Christian minister, and yet shrink from addressing one who, though they may have seen him in Church, is a stranger to them in their homes.

The care of the sick, the many duties which fall upon the Clergyman of so large a parish as Seaham Harbour, the preparation which is needed for the Sunday sermons—these works of necessity leave me much less time than I should wish to spend in visiting my Parishioners.

Therefore, I have asked the lady who brings this letter to help me in my work. From time to time, she will go to the houses of those who are willing to receive her—will lend books—will tell me of any one who is in sickness or trouble—will serve, in fact, as a link between your minister and yourselves.

Pray, Brethren, with me that God may bless us, and unite us more closely to Himself and to each other.

Pray that He, without whom all human efforts are useless, may so fill us with His Holy Spirit that we may not live to ourselves, but may give up our whole hearts to the Saviour who loved us and shed His blood to save us.

Believe me,

Your sincere friend and Pastor,

George Howard Wilkinson.

A characteristic paper is headed in large letters:

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

We are told to search the Scriptures. The following are a few

of the truths which will be found in the Scriptures if they are so searched :—

1. God is holy and true and just.
2. God has given us a law.
3. We have broken this law.
4. We are guilty in God's sight and can never have real happiness till we are pardoned.
5. We can never obtain this pardon or put ourselves right with God by any thing which *we* ourselves can do.
6. God has provided a way by which we can be pardoned. He has given His own Son to suffer the punishment of our sins by dying for us.
7. God offers to pardon us *at once* if we turn from our sins and believe in Jesus Christ. When we believe we are *justified*, that is, acquitted.
8. It is not enough to be *acquitted*. We have a bad heart which must be made good before we can enter into Heaven. The Holy Spirit alone can do this for us. This is what the Bible means by *sanctification*.
9. The Holy Spirit's help is promised to us if we earnestly pray for it.
10. The real Christian must be always trying to become better.
11. He must often ask God for what he wants in prayer.
12. He must often study his Bible.
13. He must *regularly* attend the public worship of God and not be absent from the Lord's Supper.
14. He must be holy, meek, ready to forgive, humble, charitable, self-denying, obedient to the *law* of the country and to his parents, trying in every way to follow Jesus Christ's example.
15. He must confess Christ before man.
16. He must try to bring others to Jesus and do some work for the Church of Christ.

Seaham Harbour, 1861.

Each of these propositions is illustrated in the leaflet by a number of appropriate texts.

The Advent paper for 1862 contains the following announcement.

On Monday evenings there will be a Meeting in the School-

room, when Addresses will be given by the Clergy of the Parish, on the following subjects :—

Dec. 1.—' Do you understand the Gospel ? '
Dec. 8.—' Do you feel your need of the Gospel ? '
Dec. 15.—' What good have you got from the Gospel ? '
Dec. 22.—' Why do you reject the Gospel ? '

These Meetings will begin at Half-past Seven o'clock.

BRETHREN, PRAY FOR YOURSELVES,
PRAY FOR YOUR PARISH,
PRAY FOR YOUR MINISTERS.

Great emphasis was laid on the part of the congregation in public worship :

It is earnestly requested that you will make an effort to join *aloud* in the Confession, the Lord's Prayer, and the Responses, and to say the *Amens* in a clear and *audible* voice.

When a dry, formal service is substituted for the united worship of an entire congregation, taking their part in an earnest, outspoken, hearty manner, the peculiar beauty of our Church's system is lost ;

Common Prayer then becomes a mere name ;

The devotion alike of minister and people is deadened ;

Above all, the name of the Lord God Almighty, to whom our prayers are addressed, is dishonoured.

The habit of responding is soon acquired.

In a very short time the feeling of shyness will be overcome.

May He who has promised that where two or three are gathered together in His name, He will be present in their midst, enable us all to enter more fully into the Scriptural service of our Church. May He so stir up our hearts by His Holy Spirit, that with one mind and one mouth we may glorify His Holy Name.

May He answer the prayer which has so often been uttered in this church :

O Lord, *open* Thou our *lips*,
And our *mouth* shall show forth Thy praise.

Those who are acquainted with Mr. Wilkinson's ' Instructions in the Devotional Life ' will see with interest the germ of it, which he made up into a tiny book to give away at Seaham

Harbour. The title is 'Hints for those who have given up themselves to Jesus Christ, and wish to live a Christian Life.'

HOW TO LIVE A CHRISTIAN LIFE

I. Do not hurry over your prayers. Before you kneel down, think that you are going to pray to the great God, who made heaven and earth, and that He will not listen to careless prayers.

II. When you pray, try not to say mere words, but to ask for what you really want.

Begin by asking for the help of the Holy Spirit to teach you how to pray. Then thank God for His care of you during the day or night, for the comfortable home, the kind friends, and all the earthly blessings which He has given you.

Thank Him for giving His own Son to die for you, for having taken you to be His child, for having put you into Jesus Christ's Church at your baptism, and for any help which He may have given you in resisting temptation and doing what is right.

Next, think of what you have done wrong, in thought, word, or deed, and ask Him to forgive you for Jesus Christ's sake. Then ask for anything which you want either for your body or your soul, for help to do right, to be kind and gentle, to love Jesus Christ better and to live as He would wish you to live. In fact, ask NOT for what others want, but for what you feel that YOU want.

Lastly, while you pray for yourself do not forget to ask God to bless others, your parents, your friends, your minister, the missionaries, and all who are working for Jesus Christ throughout the world.

III. Set apart a certain time EVERY DAY for your prayers and for reading your Bible. If you cannot find time during the day get up earlier. If you don't know what to read, ask your parents or your minister to show you. NEVER begin to read without asking for the help of the Holy Spirit, that you may understand what you read and get good from it.

IV. Think over what you read. Think how weak and sinful you are. Think how great is the love of Jesus Christ. Think 'I am very sinful, but Jesus died for my sins and for His sake I can be forgiven. I am very weak, but Jesus is able to give me all the strength which I need. He is always with me. He cares for me. He is ready to help me in every trouble and every temptation.'

V. Never stay away from church either in the MORNING or EVENING unless you are obliged. If there is a service DURING THE WEEK, try if possible to come. Come in good time, and, before the service begins, kneel down and ask God to keep your thoughts from wandering, and to bless what you hear to your soul. Be attentive during the service and MAKE THE RESPONSES. When the service is over, kneel down again and ask God to forgive what you have done wrong, and to help you to remember and to do what you have been told for Jesus Christ's sake.

NEVER stay away from the Lord's Supper.

VI. Do not run about from one church to another; keep to your own church. Never go to chapel.

VII. Often ask yourself during the week—am I doing what Jesus Christ would like? Is this what a Christian ought to think or say? Is this an amusement which He would not forbid? Are these the companions that a Christian ought to have? I must love Jesus more than anyone else.

VIII. Unless you are so occupied at home that you have REALLY NO TIME TO SPARE try to be useful in Christ's Church as Sunday School teacher, District Visitor, or in other ways. Your ministers will gladly find work for you, if you are ready to do it. Every week put by some money, however little it may be, for Jesus Christ. Give it to His missionaries or His poor, or spend it in helping forward some good work which is being done in your parish.

Seaham Harbour: March 9, 1861.

A little printed pamphlet contains 'A Full Report of the Speeches and Addresses delivered at a Meeting of District Visitors, Sunday School Teachers, and others, held in the National Schoolroom, Seaham Harbour, on Monday, January 5, 1863.' It was the first of those annual gatherings of which Mr. Myers speaks in the paper printed above. The pamphlet is prefaced thus:

It has pleased God, during the last two years, to impress upon many members of our congregation the privilege of labouring in His vineyard. Several who were formerly idle have now been aroused by the Holy Spirit to a sense of their responsibility as Christians, and are gladly spending a portion of their

time in imparting to others the knowledge which they themselves received.

This great proof of His love having been bestowed upon us by our Heavenly Father, it became our duty to improve His blessing to the utmost of our ability. In this spirit we determined, if possible, to consolidate our parochial workers into one body, and so to impart to every member the strength which is derived from union. We wished that the poorest child, while it collected its pence for missions, should not feel alone in its self-denying efforts, but should realise that it was enlisted into the ranks, and remembered in the prayers, of a united army of Christian soldiers, fighting with one heart under the banner of the one Lord into whose service they had been baptised.

As the first step in carrying out this object, the following invitation was sent by the Clergy. . . .

'On Monday, January 5, it is intended, with God's blessing, to hold a Meeting in the National Schoolroom of all who have been working for our Lord in connection with St. John's Church during the past year.

'Papers will be read giving an account of what has been already done in different parts of the parish, and offering suggestions as to means by which the cause in which we are all interested may be best advanced. The pleasure of your company is requested. The Meeting will commence at half-past seven.

GEORGE HOWARD WILKINSON, Incumbent.'

In the report on the work done within the church, which was presented at this parochial meeting by one of the curates, it is stated that:

In one respect a very great advance has been made. I refer to that reverential demeanour which becomes the house of God. The time can be remembered when it was not uncommon to make the commencement of the morning service dependent on the punctuality of the congregation, and when fellow-worshippers would not scruple to exchange salutations and join in trivial conversation even in immediate connexion with the solemnities of Divine worship. Thank God, such scandals are now only matters of tradition! I have also peculiar satisfaction in noticing the increased attention that is paid to points of order. With some few exceptions, we also now rise at the ascription of glory to the Trinity which follows the sermon,

stand while the offertory sentences and the exhortations at the Holy Communion are being read, and bow the head in confession of our Lord's Deity when repeating the Creed. I wish I could add that the practice of kneeling at prayer was more common, and that a longer interval was allowed to elapse between the close of the benediction and the movement of the congregation towards the doors of the church.

It need hardly be said, that in all his ministerial work at Seaham, as elsewhere, Wilkinson was aided in every way by his wife. The Rev. James H. Moore, now Canon of Truro, at that time curate of West Hartlepool, describes how he went to Seaham to take part in some special services in Advent, 1862. The Vicar was out when he arrived; but Mrs. Wilkinson was at home, and at once the two were put on friendly terms by common remembrances of Florentine art, of which there were specimens in her drawing-room.

I think, he says, it was somewhat of a change to her, busy as she must have been in parish matters, and with conversation possibly too much limited to subjects connected with the great work going on in the parish. I have often reflected that Mrs. Wilkinson's home influence must have been a real help to him in this way, that she was herself so artistic, and had a keen appreciation of natural as well as artistic beauty, which kept alive in him the same refreshing thoughts.

CHAPTER III

LETTERS AND JOURNALS

To the Rev. T. Wilkinson

Seaham Harbour: Jan. 1, 1860.

Thursday evening I came here, and have been at work with my sermons Friday and Saturday. I am very comfortably housed. As yet I have done nothing about furnishing, and made no arrangements about dear Cara coming down, for I felt that I had no right to expect a blessing on my work if I did not give the first place to it. So I shut myself up with my Bible and Concordance, and did nothing in the way of business. I have been very lonely, more so than I imagined that I should be, but I am, thank God, the better for it. I had been a good deal petted at Kensington and kept for some weeks in a whirl of excitement, and it was good for me to have a quiet commune with myself, and be still. Life with all its cares and petty prizes looks so small at times like these. When, with the Bible before me, I try to abstract myself from the daily whirl, oh, I wonder how I have ever cared for what other people said and thought about me! Oh, if only I am strengthened to serve my Saviour and do the work which He gives me to do, I feel now as if everything were just nothing! . . .

To-day has been a happy day. My congregation was with me, I think, both morning and evening.

The morning was on 'The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all'—a New Year's wish.

First, a Great Person. Jesus Christ.

Second, a Great Gift. His grace.

Third, a Great Wish. May the Grace be with you all.

The evening was extempore—'Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward.'

To the same

Seaham Harbour: Feb. 25, 1860.

'I believed and therefore have I spoken' is a nice text. I have often thought of preaching on it. If I did, I should

take the other side as well. If you don't believe, don't speak. In other words, if a man has doubts on any point, he had better be quiet about them and pray God to take them away or in some way satisfy them, instead of going open-mouthed and talking about them and sowing difficulties, which may perhaps remain in the minds of those to whom they were uttered, long after they have ceased to perplex his own mind. It is easier to pull down than to build up. . . .

The church fills capitally, and wants enlarging. The schools are full to overflowing. . . . As to the working people I am gradually making my way. Some days ago I got Candlish, who is a Dissenter, to let me have a talk to his men. He had the black-faced fellows into an upper loft, and there I talked to them and persuaded some to come out of the ranks and join a Bible Class. This is begun, and promises well. I am to carry out the same experiment next Tuesday at the Iron Works, and a number of men in the Harbour seem inclined to come for a similar purpose. Then I have got some of the tradesmen's daughters to become Sunday School Teachers, and they come to my house once a fortnight and prepare the lessons which they are to give the children. My wife is one of them, and it is great fun asking her questions, as if she was just an indifferent party. My preaching is written in the morning and extempore in the evening, and a more attentive congregation I never preached to. . . .

What do you think of those preachings at Theatres and midnight meetings at St. James's Hall? I fear much that they are a mistake. For one who may be influenced for good I fear that there will be a hundred who will be led to regard religion with contempt. I do not *think* St. Paul would have carried out either scheme; but one hardly likes to criticise, when the work to be done is so great and difficult.

To the Rev. F. R. Chapman

Seaham Harbour: March 18 [1860].

The Sunday's work is over, tolerably satisfactory, except that I found to my intense disappointment that one of my favourite sermons was above the head of the mass of my congregation. However, one must hope for better things. Perhaps it was my fault, perhaps theirs. The evening congregation is very satisfactory, quite full and more than full, making it

absolutely necessary to enlarge, so I have had an architect over and am daily waiting for an estimate.

You will not be surprised, though sorry, to hear that my own architect [1] has not *written* but *drawn* himself 'an ass.' You remember how in two letters he told me that those pretty plans would be done under 1100*l.* It nows turns out that 1700*l.* will barely do them. It was a disappointment to give up a pretty toy, but there was only one thing to do—namely, condemn them and order fresh ones to be made, more suitable to our pocket. It would have been not only foolish, but wrong, to live at a higher rental than our income warrants, and so be obliged to curtail our expenditure in things where there ought to be no stint. The schools want enlarging, so from my heart I wish you were within reach to do a little of the practical work for me—and for other reasons too, I need scarcely say; I wish we could have a good talk together. If I could find any decent excuse I would run up for a day or two, but there is none, and I am very busy.

I suppose from your silence you know nothing of a curate. I am looking about in all directions, and should be very thankful if I could find a nice fellow. I advertised in the 'Guardian,' with no results, have written to many friends, but with little practical benefit as yet. I wish I had one—two sermons, a Bible Class, and other classes are a tax—too much pouring out and little time for receiving. The only blessing is that my mornings are my own. I refuse to make any engagements for them that I can possibly avoid, and five out of six are for the most part free.

The first rush of my reception is over. I have been warmly welcomed, and my path most mercifully smoothed for me. Now comes the rub—to make my character as a minister of the Gospel, an ambassador of Christ, distinctly felt. It will be a hand-to-hand business, very little dealing with masses, downright personal individual influence—very trying and responsible work. My theory is to get a *few* in each class and make them serve as lights to lighten their own portion of the community, that so the place may in God's own time be enlightened. I have some very nice fellows, both rich and poor. Few in number, as those who act as salt of the earth generally are, but, I trust, deeply rooted in Christ.

Oh, Chapman, how one falls back upon one's own want of

[1] For his new vicarage.

faith, one's own want of trust in the Lord whom we serve. It is so seldom that I can pray, so seldom that I can realise my true position as in direct communication with the Lord Jesus, aided by His Spirit, going out merely to deliver His message simply and faithfully, and leaving issues to Him. What zeal and rest and peace such a feeling as this would give, if it were only habitual. At times it does come, and what a difference it makes in one's whole feeling and deeds. Surely we have need to pray one for another that we may be enriched with all those spiritual blessings, that joy and peace in believing, that abiding trust, that consciousness that our Lord is with us 'even to the end of the world,' which are our heritage as members and above all as ministers of the Gospel Kingdom.

I am very thankful that you are seeing fruits of your sermons. I am sure that they do good and great good, and I believe that every month your influence will grow. . . . It is only on this ground that I can understand your being kept at Kensington; but there must be work which you have to do, or you would be removed. It must be very dreary for you, my dear fellow, with all the low degrading influences ever depressing you, and crushing the best part of one. It all flashes before me sometimes, and sorry though I am to be so far from you, I do thank God that I am removed from that withering influence. You have a pleasanter position, however, than I had—more independent—St. Paul's to yourself, Jennings' Buildings, Schools to yourself, &c.—so don't let yourself get down, my dear old fellow. We shall soon meet, please God, and have a good heart talk together.

I have been ill the last week or so, nervous, overworked and somewhat depressed; but while I am so, I feel I have no right to be, and the grand eternal ocean, with its ever varying surface, is a wonderful medicine. But sometimes I seem to realise what has to be done, and what I am, and it knocks me over.

What do you think of theatres and preaching? How do you like Reynell and Stoughton Co-Secretaries for Bible Society? I cannot make up my mind clearly about that society. On every other point I make a broad line between myself and Dissenters (officially that is, though of course not in their personal capacity), but here I don't feel sure whether all should not join in spreading the Word of God. On the other hand, my being co-secretary with a Dissenter would be a sham. I have had more than once to take a decided Church line since I came

here, and I believe that as a mere matter of expediency it is the only thing to be done. . . .

We are to have Rural Decanal Chapters every quarter. I have been to one, which was interesting. There is a question whether each member may, if he chooses, introduce a layman. I am strongly advocating it. I believe the Clergy always run wild if they have not a little of the lay element. I wrote to the Bishop of London about the Westminster workhouse, and he sent on my letter to Canon Jennings with a private note of his own, which he says in his answer to me will, he thinks, remedy the evil. I believe in this as in everything else he overestimates the trouble, but I am very thankful to feel that everything which could be done has been done. . . .

I am very glad about the Brigade. The conduct of the Palace Gardens people is most satisfactory, and proves the fact of your influence. . . . I like your Lent course. I hope you will publish the 'Anger.' I think it will be good and do good. How unsettled everything looks abroad. It does not disturb me much, as I believe the end is not far off, and I often feel as if we should really be spared the pain of dying by the return of our Lord. I bring forward the fact of our Lord's Second Advent whenever I have an opportunity. I feel that it is being taught to the ministers to be taught by them to the whole Church. It is very remarkable how the thoughts of men are being led to dwell on it.

This Volunteer movement is very hopeful. It looks as if England was going to make a good stand for liberty and religion when the great crash comes; the powers of Despotism are only getting ready, and fearful will be the hour when the first onslaught is made. I hope our dear old country will play her part bravely, but I am afraid she is allowing Napoleon to humbug her. Have you read Stanley's two sermons on Freedom and Labour? First rate. Guthrie ('Gospel in Ezekiel' and 'Christ and the Inheritance of Saints') I find very useful for my extempore sermons. It teems with illustrations, in fact is overburdened with them; but one can pick out some charming pictures to relieve the more solid matter of one's sermons. I am going on systematically with my foundation course. The enmity having been destroyed, Christ's kingdom having been established, we are baptised into it; yet the condition of membership is temptation. The Hivites and Perizzites remain to prove Israel. The Christian's faith is more precious than gold and

[God] allows him to be tried. The three tempters, world, flesh, devil, each occupy a sermon. No. 2 I took to-night. I trust the course may do good. It begins with the rudiments and is based on the Catechism, in my mind, though not in words. . . .

Lady L. goes away on Wednesday, which I am for some reasons sorry for, as dining there now and then is a beneficial change.

My wife sends her love to yours and thanks for your letter. God bless you, my dear Chapman.

To the Rev. T. Wilkinson

Seaham Harbour: March 25, 1860.

By the way, I was talking to an old woman here the other day, and when I was going away she said 'Well, God bless you, sir, and strengthen you to do the great work which lies before you.' I felt her manner even more than the words, and I said 'Thank you, you don't know how a word like that helps one, for I feel very often how much there is to be done, and how unfit I am to do it.' 'Ah,' she said, 'but you don't know how many are the prayers which are offered up for you. Many a time, when you are going to preach, those are praying for you whom you little think of.' Was it not cheering?

Sometimes I am almost knocked over with the feeling of responsibility, when I see that crowded church in an evening, every face looking up to me, and nearly all older than myself. However, there is the message to be given, and age is little matter if the message is faithfully delivered.

To the Rev. F. R. Chapman

[Seaham Harbour: April 2, 1860.]

My dearest Chapman,—As we cannot have our old Passion Week talks, we must write our thoughts. After to-day I shall have no time, but to-day I do no work which is not unavoidable, so have half an hour to spare. I am happy in myself, thank God, but out of heart about what I see around me. Dead cold, formal, respectable attendance at Sunday [service], but no love to Christ, no care for Communion. Do not trouble to answer this; for while I write, the answers arise in my mind; for I know I ought to be thankful for more than one new communicant whom I have been allowed to bring to the Table, and for many signs which are really encouraging. I crave,

however, more than I can tell you, for more entire devotedness to our Blessed Lord—to feel His passion—to enter into His grief, when He saw the glorious city stretched out before Him and knew that within its walls scarce ten righteous would be found—to suffer with Him when He foresaw Peter's fall and knew the bitter sifting which Satan would inflict before he was able to arise and walk once more in the consciousness of his Master's forgiveness.

It seems to me that if one could only for one single day realise in one's heart the Redeemer's agony, if these blessed Passion Week services would only by God's Spirit bring home to one the events which every day we read, and on which we discourse in such glowing language—I don't know whether what I write conveys any meaning to you, but to my mind Passion Week seems to bring back to one the spirit of the old Psalmist, 'Oh God, my soul longeth for Thee in a barren and dry land where no water is.' With everything which man could desire, a happy home, and wife who can fully sympathise with me, a consciousness that God does love me and is training me for Heaven, I do long for something which I cannot express. 'Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus.' Oh Chapman, how glorious it would be, if before we have sunk down into the self-satisfied ease which seems to be the fate of middle-aged Clergymen, if now while we are really thirsting for something higher and nobler and better than anything which we have seen as yet, except in dim and partial glimpses—Oh how glorious it would be, if now the Lord were to appear and end this wearing anxious struggle with evil by His own advent. 'Behold I come quickly—Even so, come, Lord Jesus.'

And now, having written thus far, I fancy it is all stuff, and feel inclined to burn what is written, and reserve what I wanted to express till we meet and can talk about it. The fact is I have been much annoyed lately. People making great professions and doing nasty mean acts to one another which a heathen would have been ashamed of. Intolerance amongst Clergymen of everyone who does not utter their own narrow shibboleth—and, side by side with all this, the feeling that God has revealed to myself such a view of His truth as would meet the deep heart-cravings of my fellow men—and yet I do not give it out in its full power, because I am not living in that deep, abiding union with Christ, which gives one the consciousness of a power not one's own and realises my idea of inspiration. There are

times, Chapman, few, indeed, and at long intervals, but still there are times, when I feel this, when I am speaking calmly and quietly and yet feel that every word is going straight to the hearts of my people either as a savour of life unto life or of death unto death, and I believe that this might always be the case if I were so living in union with Christ as to be able to bear it—able to feel that I was speaking with power and yet at the same time to be truly humble. To be abased that Christ may be exalted. To be content to be nothing that He may be all in all. How hard this is and yet it is the condition of saving souls. Not I, but Christ that speaketh, that worketh that influence, in me and by me.

I have been preaching on the way in which, since the Fall, God has by the laws of nature prepared men's minds to realise the idea of the sacrifice of our Lord—one man suffering for the sake of others. In the natural world Robertson supplies all the materials in a sermon on Caiaphas's idea of sacrifice, but it comes out more forcibly in cases like Decius the Roman, who died to save his country. No one can believe, I think, that God is educating the human race and—granting that the Atonement is the central truth of the whole of our system—can deny that such acts of self-sacrifice were intended by God to train men for receiving what would otherwise have been utterly unintelligible, the death of the just for the unjust, of the Lord Jesus for a sinful world. . . .

Last night I was preaching on 'Simon, Simon, Satan has desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat,' giving the proper reading 'He has desired to have *you* (all), but I have prayed for *thee*,' and I took the sifting to refer, not to the desertion, but to the time after the desertion, the hours in which Satan would tempt them to believe that the sin was too great for uprising, too black a dye to be washed out. Peter's loud professions, his impulsive character, &c., &c., would all give the Devil a special hold upon him. Therefore our Lord encouraged him by telling him that He had prayed for him—this would help him to rise up again, would help him to resist the adversary by steadfast trust in the love of His Lord. The application, of course, to Satan's temptings after we have fallen. 'There is a pardon, you *can* be forgiven—the Blood of Jesus cleanses from all sin—steadfast in this faith, resist the attacks of your great enemy, who goes about as a roaring lion seeking to devour you, to rob you of your peace, to keep you

from the Lord's Supper. Even if he cannot destroy your soul altogether, to make you gloomy and unhappy and useless, instead of full of the joy and peace of believing.' God bless you, my dear Chapman. Kindest remembrances from my wife. We hope yours is better. I must go out for a funeral.

Yours ever,
G. H. W.

To the same

S[eaham] H[arbour]: May 9, 1860.

My dear Chapman,—Your letter gave me sincere pleasure, the more so as you acknowledge your bad conduct in not having written earlier. I was going to have written to remind you that though debtor and creditor correspondence is a sort of thing that I much dislike, I had written two long letters and therefore deserved one in return. However, you have cast yourself on my mercy, so I will not (to adopt the pugilistic slang which seems the fashion of the day) hit a man when he is down.

My correspondence has fallen terribly into arrears. My Father is away and requires long letters. Business of all kinds has to be written about, besides the ordinary list of correspondents.

However, not to waste time, I am much interested with the account that you give me of H. B. So long as it is confined to a *few* really good people, the system may do very well; but suppose it extended at all, just fancy the openings for and temptation to hypocrisy. There is a true idea, just as there is in all dissent; and so far as this true idea goes, well and good, but the error which is mixed up with it would soon work its fall. For a similar instance of mixture of good and evil read a very interesting little work on the causes of the decline of Quakerism ('The Peculium,' by Hancock: Smith, Elder & Co.).[1] What you tell me about confessing sins is a fatal error. In fact the Lord's Prayer is in itself enough to condemn it. Yet it has the germ of truth that we ought not to be morbidly dwelling on our sins, but confess them and, if I may so speak, have done with them, in the full belief that they are washed out in the Saviour's Blood—then, like St. Paul, leaving the things which are behind (sins as well as everything else) to press forwards Robertson has a beautiful sermon on this.

[1] Republished in 1907 by the Church Historical Society, with an Introduction by the Bishop of Gibraltar.

How solemn a thought it is that by an unfaithful or even injudicious discharge of our office we may force men out of the Church; this is the secret of Wesley's defection, &c., &c. In fact in some places it has been, and I am afraid still is, almost impossible for an earnest man to remain a Churchman. I am getting more and more to love the Church, not in the sense of priesthood, but in the broader acceptation of the term. What a grand contrast to the low views of God which Dissent fosters, to hear her addressing every baptised man as belonging to Christ, as God's son, as brought within the Spirit's influence, as intended by God, if only he will not reject it, to live with Christ for ever hereafter. I feel that if our Church's teaching was to be revised by the Calvinistic party so as to cut out this foundation of all her services, I should be obliged to secede. Yet all the tendency of the present day either runs in that direction, or in the confusion of good and evil, wheat and tares, goats and sheep, which make Maurice & Co. so unsatisfactory.

I am thankful to say that I have secured a curate for September. I like him much. He was recommended to me by the Bishop [1]—has been six years an Independent minister, gives up 300*l.* a year for conscience sake, believing Dissent to be wrong. He began from the state of the baptised, and worked up till he felt the Church must be his home. He is a very moderate High Churchman; his sermon very first-rate to read—I have not heard him preach;—'I determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ and Him crucified,' &c. A minister to carry the principles of Christianity into everything, but to make the cross of Christ his standpoint, to look at the whole picture of Christian doctrines from that point. This is what I like. Don't you? I am very thankful that I have secured him. He was sent to me so providentially that I feel it a direct answer to my prayers, and am therefore more confident for the future. He is earnest, well educated, and believing entirely in the entire dependence of all success upon earnest prayer for the Holy Spirit.

By the way a neighbour of mine has returned from a quiet tour through the revival neighbourhoods of Ireland, has attended the clerical meetings in Dublin, and is full of thankfulness for the fruits which he has witnessed. He is a somewhat excitable man, but he says that wherever the Clergy were sensible, the result has been a great increase of regular communicants, &c. I know you will like to hear. 'Not by might, nor by power, but

[1] Bishop Longley.

by My Spirit.' 'Ask and ye *shall* receive.' 'He did not many mighty works because of their unbelief.' These three texts should never be forgotten, and it is such a happiness that, though so far away from each other, we can pray for each other, and while we ask for the Holy Spirit's presence in our own heart and church, not forget to pray that He may also be present with one's brother in Christ.

I like to think of you on a Saturday eve and still more on the quiet Sunday morning. I always have a calm, peaceful half hour before I go to church, and many pleasant pictures arise in my mind, and I often seem to be with you all in the dear old parish. I wish I could get a peep at you this summer, but I fear that it is impossible.

I did not like the tone of your last letter—not this, but the former one—you seemed dispirited and out of heart. I don't wonder, for Kensington air is fearfully depressing. I never knew how depressing till I experienced the contrast. This air is very grand, and the great and wide sea helps to raise one in spite of the dead weights which are ever trying to drag one down.

I am glad to find our thoughts have been running in the same groove for morning sermons. . . . I have been preaching on Rom. vi. 4, 5, 6, and cognate passages. We have a lower and a higher nature. The lower is naturally alive and active. The higher we receive wrapt in the gravecloths of death. In Adam all die; the Bible ignores the lower nature and counts a man dead or alive according to [the] state of [the] higher. The blessing of Baptism is that we are certain that we are brought within the Spirit's influence, and if, when we are able, we acknowledge His presence by asking His aid and listening to His voice, He will quicken for us this higher nature which we cannot raise to life, no more than we can raise a corpse from death. In other words, He will reproduce in each of us, if we will let Him, the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, will in fact fulfil the pledge and answer the prayers of Baptism, 'Grant that the old man,' &c., &c.

This is but an imperfect sketch, but it is very comforting, the idea of the two natures. The lower nature to be nailed to the cross and be buried with Christ; the higher nature to be raised from the dead, as Christ arose, by the power of the same Spirit, that so we may walk in newness of life. Risen with Christ, crucified with Christ, yet I live. 'I live, yet not

I, but Christ liveth in me.' What glorious expressions even now, but how much more glorious when they are fully realised hereafter.

I have had much happiness in my Easter sermons. I found afterwards that Archer Butler had the idea of receiving the higher nature wrapped in death and having the promise of the Holy Spirit to quicken it. I like finding these confirmations of what I have worked out. The practical applications are excellent. . . . I never realised the deep meaning of Eastertide before. Evenings I continue my course. I am now busy with the helps which are given to all the baptised to fight the Lord's battle.

I. Prayer with the assurance of an answer.

II. Holy Communion—the means by which Jesus, the bread of life, feeds the Christian.

III. The Bible, &c., &c., the lamp and light for the Christian.

The one on the Holy Communion was more like an inspiration than anything which I have felt. I was very unfit and unequal for preaching, inclined to take an old sermon ; but feeling that my evening congregation would listen more to extempore as usual, I preached it, and felt that every word *went in* either for a blessing or for condemnation. It has added to my communicants and, I trust, done much good. I still keep to my old plan—write for the morning, extempore for evening. For the latter, congregation is very full.

The people are very, very kind to me. The old men treat me like a son, and are as proud if any one speaks well of me as if they were praised themselves. It was very happy the other day to point out to one of them the Gospel in its glorious simplicity. For fifty-five years he had been eaten up with money-making and business. Everything had gone wrong with him, and at last his favourite son had died. Then he took to going to church and never missed for five years. Still all was hard and cold and no happiness—working hard to do right but no peace. He has just had a long illness, and he seemed so happy when I showed him how the Father had been training him all the time, drawing him away from the world by losses and trials, then showing him how unable he was to save himself, and at last sending me to him in this illness just to tell him of the gift freely offered, all done for him, only to accept it and then work not for hire but from love. Last week he recovered and got out once more. Saturday was his sixty-sixth

birthday, and Sunday he stayed to the Communion for the first time.

By the way I was sent for to a man who was dangerously ill, and for days I had to read to him without his being able to speak. I firmly believe that by God's blessing he has gone back to his work changed, and when I asked him what passages touched him most, he said that what made him feel first was about the Good Shepherd going after the *one* lost sheep into the wilderness, and angels rejoicing in one sinner's repentance. I mention this because I believe we may help each other much by mentioning these sort of things.

My two Bible Classes still continue. I have very few at each, and do not try at present to enlarge the number. I am more anxious to get some leaven to leaven the lump. I have a good staff of Sunday School Teachers in the Girls' School, who meet me once a fortnight and go over the lessons which are to be taught. I have almost organised a staff of young men of a similar kind. Things promise well for a District Visitors' Society soon. I hope to enlarge my church this summer; the house is to be begun on Monday, so my hands are full.

I am, thank God, very well; better than I have been for a long time; but sometimes I have very anxious hours. It is a fearful responsibility and many difficulties. However, taking all together, I have every reason to be most thankful. Dear Cara is indefatigable. She has thrown herself heart and soul into parish work. All the poor love her, and she is an immense help to me, takes all the chronic cases of sickness off my hands, unless they are very peculiar. She says she was never so happy in her life. Instead of having to go alone, as I had in Kensington, I can take her anywhere without interfering with other people's districts, and we generally have at any rate a short walk together. We subscribe to Mudie with a couple of our neighbours, so we do not rust so much as might have been expected.

I have had some very heavy anxieties lately, but all has got right at last. Our Father is very merciful—most merciful I think in the way in which He makes us feel that He is training us, that the annoyances which we meet with are allowed by Him to prune some evil habit or purify some half-worldly, half-Christian desire. Oh, what need have we to pray for each other that we may walk more by faith and less by sight, realise more our high privileges in Christ ('a chosen generation, a royal priest-

hood, a peculiar people'), enjoy more of that sense of our Redeemer's presence which is the foretaste of eternal happiness. I feel sometimes as if one never could struggle on for the ordinary run of life, as if one could never fight against evil within and without for 10, 20, 30, 40, 50 more years. It may be that before then the Lord will have returned. 'Even so, come, Lord Jesus,' we may indeed pray when our work with all its difficulties is pressing upon us.

How is your wife? My wife sends her kind love to her. She would write to her, but knows she hears through me, and parish work, writing to her Father, Aunt Grey, &c., and babies occupy a good deal of time. I had my choir to supper the other night, 28 in number. I was much pleased with them. The whole tone, the songs which they sang, the great and marked temperance, everything in fact, pleased me much, and made me very thankful that I had so nice a lot of young people in my church. They sing capitally. What sort of a man was Poole who was with you in Leeds? I seem to have much to say, but I have written a tremendous letter. May God bless you, my dear Chapman, and prosper everything which you take in hand.

Ever yours affectly.,
G. H. W.

Remember us very kindly to Mrs. Bedford. Tell Brooke to write to me.

To the Rev. ——

My dear ——,—Your letter arrived just as I was intending to write to you. I had heard you were ill and out of spirits and thought that a letter might cheer you up.

I have carefully thought over what you say, and I need scarcely tell you that I would not hold back what I really thought from any fear of hurting your feelings. I know that you wish me to write frankly and I will do so.

From what I saw of you, from what your visitors told me, and still more from what your poor said, I am convinced that you are not unfit for the ministry in any other sense than that in which we all feel how utterly unworthy we are of so great a responsibility. I felt and said to my wife on more than one occasion that I had seldom seen a man who was more likely to prove a blessing to his people than you were. I write this because it is in this way only that I can answer your question.

As to having gone into orders without sufficient reflection, that may be. Bitterly have I regretted that I so little realised its responsibilities before I was thrown into the midst of active work and so was deprived of that leisure for reflection which is so great a source of strength. I often felt, as you feel, that it would have been better for me to have remained a layman, but I am thankful to say that lately those feelings have been quite removed, as God has taught me to realise more His love and forbearance, and to feel that *the* way to please Him is to trust more fully in Him, to leave behind past mistakes and past sins and to press forwards, doing to the best of one's ability the work which lies before one and not doubting His forgiveness or treating Him as a hard and austere Master but as a Father. The more I have acted in this way the more happy I have been in my work, and though there are times unknown to anyone but my God and myself, when I am wretched on account of the low motives, the unprofitable teaching, the want of power and love and earnestness, of which I am conscious, yet I feel even then that we are but instruments and that God's work is accomplished not by human might or power but by His own Spirit.

It is such thoughts as these which will, I think, be most likely to comfort you, my dear ——. Dwell on the love and *Humanity* of our Blessed Lord. Try to realise that He by His Spirit is training you and will lead you on step by step and complete in you whatever may now be lacking. Feel that every depression and trial is only laid upon you that you may be better able to succour those who are tried in like manner. Remember that our Lord and Master was no stranger to these dark hours and that ' My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ' was not a mere exclamation, but the expression of this very depression felt in its bitterest form. It is by suffering that we are made like to Him, and He who has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows will support us under every trial and in His own time deliver us from it.

Truly and honestly I see no reason why you should shrink from the Priesthood. It is, however, a question whether a year's perfect rest is not the best thing for you both physically and mentally. If I were in your place I should take one year's perfect rest. I should travel and read and think, and I believe that in this way you would come back better fitted both in body and in mind for your work than you have ever been before.

You might then be ordained Priest, and by God's help start afresh.

Again, however, I repeat, and I am convinced that what I say is true, that you have no reason for shrinking from your work of the ministry on account of unfitness. Let me hear from you when you have time. You will have my earnest prayer that God may comfort you under this heavy trial.

Believe me, my dear —— (with all kind remembrances from my wife),

Your very sincere friend,
G. Howard Wilkinson.

Seaham Harbour: April 13, 1860.

To the Rev. T. Wilkinson

Seaham Harbour: May 7, 1860.

Our life here is very quiet, but very happy. I have now got the Communion every first Sunday in the month, and each time brings one or two new communicants. I feel so thankful when I hear them talking to me about it, and then see them coming up on the Sunday to the Lord's Table.

Yesterday a man and his wife were present who but a short time ago were famed for their quarrels and discord, and now they are living happily together, and at last have sealed their reconciliation by coming together to the Communion.

A man said to me the other day, 'Ah, sir, you are not so High Church as most of the priests in your Church!' As I had not been uttering either High or Low Church doctrine, I asked what he meant. 'Why, sir,' he said, 'you talk plain and clear and speak to our hearts like.' A new definition of High Church, is it not?

Another told me that I had got really into the hearts of the people.

When I hear these things it makes me so happy that I hardly feel as if I could be thankful enough; and they always come when I have had any great bother, as if God sent it to me to cheer me up and teach me that He was really with me. Dear little Cara helps me much; she has thrown herself thoroughly into parish work, visits for me amongst the sick, makes herself so pleasant to all the tradesmen's daughters who teach in my Sunday School—in fact, as I tell her, she is becoming a first-rate parson's wife.

To the same

Seaham Harbour: June 25, 1860.

I have been immensely delighted with the two first addresses of the Bishop of Oxford to Candidates for Ordination; the remainder I have not yet read. I like to keep a book of that sort on hand. It stirs one up in this out-of-the-way place, where one is necessarily a good deal alone, and likely to miss the spur to work which the work of others gives in London.

To the same

Seaham Harbour: Dec. 31, 1860.

It almost frightens me when I sit quietly and think how much has been left undone—when I try to realise that the Blood of God's own Son was really shed for me, and yet what cold, heartless progress, what lost opportunities of doing good which can never be recalled! Oh, what a blessed thought, that in all this weakness and all this sin there is a Saviour—there is one higher than man, who yet loves us with real human sympathy, and cares more for us than we care for Him. If it were not for this thought, this miserable worldliness and self-seeking would make one utterly despond, to have received so much and to be loving so little.

May God help us all to begin the new year with more love to His Son and more devotion to His service! . . .

I am very grieved to hear that you have been in bad spirits. I know well what it is. It is not the great things, but the hundred little bothers of life which worry one. When I first came here they nearly drove me mad sometimes, but I find now that I get over them much better than I did, by just going quietly into my own room and kneeling down and telling them all to our Saviour. It seems to help one better than anything else. It makes one feel that, after all, this life is only the school for another, and that it is little matter in what form the teaching is given, if only we feel it comes from above. God bless you, my own dear Uncle.

To the same

Seaham Harbour: March 1861 [?]

I should have written sooner, but I have been very busy with Confirmation candidates. We had sixty-seven of all ages and sexes, old and young, married and unmarried—and for five

weeks my whole time has been taken up with them, seeing each class of twelve, first once a week, then twice a week, and at last having them one by one. It has been a trying, anxious time but, thank God, a very happy one. I trust much seed has been sown, the fruit of which will be seen in after years. God is certainly doing a great work here. One after another is beginning to inquire, 'What must I do to be saved?' and the whole parish feel that there is a quiet, gradual awakening going on. Green and I meet every week for special reading and prayer, and reason, indeed, we have to thank our Father for the way in which our prayers are being answered. It is His work, and to Him be the glory—but it is very very blessed to see one who was living quite carelessly begin to feel the Holy Spirit working in his heart and give up himself to the Saviour. I shall never forget the Confirmation day. Each minister took up his own flock to the Communion Table, and there waited till the Bishop's hands had been laid upon them. We are now busy preparing them for their first Communion on Easter Sunday, and when that is over, I hope to get away for a little rest.

To the same

Seaham Harbour: Dec. 10, 1861.

The parish is getting on capitally. I sent you a paper of what we were doing. Both the service and the meeting have, thank God, been most successful. Green and I work capitally together, and I think the people like one as well as the other, which is a great blessing. At the service we are preaching on the storm, the wreck, &c., and have had excellent congregations, including numbers who had never been before. The services on Sunday are fuller than ever, and I shall be heartily thankful when the new part [of the church] is completed. This I hope it will be next month. At the meeting in the schoolroom we have prayer, then some point is taken up; Scripture passages bearing on it are explained in a quiet, familiar way as if we were talking to the people in their own rooms. It seems to be sending home truths which were never realised before. I trust a blessing may rest upon all our plans, for every day is teaching us our own weakness more and more. We seem like children, so powerless are we amongst the thousands whom God has entrusted to our care. But the work is going on, very very slowly, but surely. One by one is coming forward and declaring himself determined by God's grace to live and work for Christ;

and it was quite gladdening to see a young fellow to-day, a servant, who before this last spring was quite careless and thoughtless, and while he was in the south God's Spirit touched his heart, and now, like the Prodigal, he does not seem able to express his joy and thankfulness. The tears came into his eyes, and his voice almost gave way, when he spoke of all that the Saviour had done for his soul. And now his one thought seemed to be to live to Him, to give up anything for His sake, to bear all and do all, if only he could bring others to share the joy which he himself was feeling. It was the most perfect illustration that I have seen of 'The Love of Christ constraineth us, for we thus judge, that He died for all, that they which live should not live unto themselves, but unto Him who loved them and gave Himself for them.' Oh, Uncle, these sort of things do cheer one up and make up for many a disappointment and many an anxious day. To see and talk with one who was thoroughly careless and is now full of the joy and the peace of believing stamps the whole with truth, and makes one go back to labour more than ever for the Saviour who has given such a proof of His love in bringing back that lost sheep to His fold.

How my pen has been running on! But I know you love me enough to prefer to have it just as it comes, and my heart is very full of thankfulness to-night, [so] that I cannot help writing just as I feel at the moment.

To the Rev. T. Myers

St. John's Parsonage, Seaham Harbour: January 17, 1862.

My dear Sir,—I quite agree with your views as to the evil which is caused by extreme opinions on Church matters, and am glad that you are identified with neither party. In what I am going to ask you, I hope you will not consider that I am anxious to press for a more explicit statement of your opinions than you may be inclined to give. I feel, however, that it is so important for the clergy of a parish to have a *general agreement* in their doctrinal views, that I think it only fair to give you a sketch of the teaching which is very emphatically given in our pulpit.

Baptismal Regeneration,
Justification by faith,
Conversion,
Assurance,

are all accepted and have all their proper place in my scheme

of teaching. I consider that all who have been baptised are (in one sense) born again, inasmuch as they are taken by God to be His own children, and are certain of the Holy Spirit's help as soon as ever it is possible for that Spirit to work on their young hearts. They are not to love God *in order* that He may love them, but because He has already loved and adopted them, and made them partakers of all the blessings which Christ has purchased for His Church.

Yet at the same time each individual soul must by the Holy Spirit be *changed*. The old nature must be crucified. The new nature must be developed. It must be brought truly to believe in the Saviour, that, being justified by faith, it may have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The assurance of this reconciliation with God is a gift which I conceive to be *offered* to all, but not obtained by all real Christians.

I should be glad to hear whether your own views agree sufficiently with mine to enable you to work happily with me. At the same time I hope you will understand that I have the greatest sympathy with many who differ from me on most of the points to which I have referred. It is only for the sake of unanimity in our teaching that I have brought them so prominently forward. . . .

I hope you will kindly excuse all these inquiries and

Believe me

Sincerely yours,

G. Howard Wilkinson.

To the Rev. T. Wilkinson

December 4, 1862.

I hope you received the two newspapers with the Roman Catholic correspondence. It was a great bother, but I am thankful to say that I got well out of the matter. Nothing can justify her in not allowing them to *buy* or *lease* a bit of ground. It is a very different thing to what they formerly asked, namely a *gift*. She asked me privately about it, and I said it seemed to me that she could not help letting it to them. I said we thought it hard in a Roman Catholic country if we were not allowed to have a spot of ground, and 'Do as you would be done by.'

However, so far as I am concerned, the longer they are kept out the happier for me; but still *right* is *right*.

The three following letters show that the new work and new attachments did not make Wilkinson forget his friends at Kensington and their work. Miss Cotton, now Mrs. Wilkinson (but not connected with his own family), was concerned in an Industrial School at Kensington, which Mr. Chapman was chiefly instrumental in founding.

St. John's Parsonage, Seaham Harbour: Aug. 26, 1861.

My dear Miss Cotton,—You must not be discouraged about the school. Remember how very many difficulties we had in olden days, how sorely we were tried by cases like that of ——, &c., &c., &c., and yet how mercifully our Lord delivered us out of them all. We have no right to expect a smooth path, if we are members of one who was crowned with thorns and nailed to a cross, and in all our troubles we have this unfailing comfort, that however weak we may be, however many mistakes we may make, God will not allow His purposes to fail, but will bring good out of evil, and make the very difficulties which weigh so heavily upon us the means of furthering His own all-wise purposes.

I have had much need to impress all this upon my own heart lately, as I have had much trial and disappointment in my work. Everyone considers that we ought to be triumphant on account of the change which has taken place in the parish, but I can look at realities better than they can, and while we have indeed reason to thank God, there is much as yet which is altogether superficial. In one way or another, since I saw you, I have had nothing but small annoyances, which at first are very wearing, but for which I can now sincerely thank my Heavenly Father, for they have, I hope, done much to humble me and to drive me in more simple dependence to my Saviour. What a real blessing it is when we are allowed to feel that our Lord is thus teaching us, drawing us to Himself, allowing us to bear just the very burdens which will weigh down our own natural self, and force us to come to Himself for life and strength. Have you ever read a book called 'The Patience of Hope'? It is full of beautiful thoughts and most suggestive. If you have it not, I will send it to you.

I have been thinking much of all the intellectual difficulties which are arising around us in this generation—'Essays and Reviews,' &c. . . . It is an anxious time, but I feel sure that

good will come out of the trial. The majority of the laity in England have a sort of stupid historical faith, very vague and seldom strengthened by any reflection, and it will be very good for some of them to be obliged to ask, 'What is the foundation on which the Church stands, the Bible stands, on which I myself stand?' Two things we shall all require in the coming struggle:

1. Real faith in Christ, by which I mean something more than orthodox views, correct ideas as to the Atonement, &c. We must have that practical belief in a living Saviour, Divine and Human, who has died for our sins and lives to help us. We want to realise in our daily trials and temptations and doubts that He *is* with us, *does* care for us, will by His Spirit guide us into all truth, laying on us no greater burden than we are able to bear, and carrying us through every trial to our Eternal Home. If we had this practical faith, the waves of doubt and trial might dash as they would against our fortress and we should be unharmed. But how difficult is it thus to live by faith—so easy to speak in correct orthodox language, so easy to talk *about* Christ, but so hard to live *united to* Christ; yet this is the only safeguard in times like these, or in fact in any times.

2. And, again, we shall have great need of toleration and Christian charity; while holding fast what we ourselves believe to be true, we must make allowances for those who differ from us. Many difficult questions are now being opened, and it is next to certain that many differences of opinion will arise amongst those who *think*. It is easy enough for ignorance to be dogmatic, but thoughtful minds will naturally see many different sides of truth, and one will cling to this part and another to that. We must beware of injuring the usefulness of anyone by stamping him as unsound, unless we are quite certain, and also are *obliged* as a matter of duty to express our opinion. Truth was never helped, her battle never fought, by hard words and unkind judgments, and many of the most useful men have gained a firm footing only after being tossed about on the waves of speculation and doubt for many years.

There is one thing to which I cling much in these days, when everything is being tried as gold is tried in the furnace—I mean the union of Christians. It is, I think, such a blessed thought that those to whom one is linked by Christian ties throughout the world are not really separated from us. It is a glorious privilege to know that as I am allowed to pray for those who are tried and harassed, so are they praying for me—

that week by week our supplications for each other do arise to the mercy-seat on high, and that God is pleased to answer these petitions.

St. John's Parsonage, Seaham Harbour: Feb. 14, 1862.

My dear Miss Cotton,—All you tell me about the Industrial is, as you know, intensely interesting to me. I am very glad to have so good an account of the Matron. That is more than half the battle, and then the good financial condition is another cause for thankfulness. . . .

I have now had a special service every Sunday for the last six months, to which children only are admitted, and I cannot tell you the strength which it gives me to believe that each little one has been received by the Saviour, that His Spirit is striving with each, that each may, if only the Church and the parents do their parts, be saved the dreary wandering into the far land—and when I look on my own little boy, and see how God's Spirit is already beginning to work in his little heart, convincing him of sin by teaching him what is wrong, and making him sit quiet and reverent while family worship is being conducted, I feel so thankful that I escaped from the school of theology which would teach that the Spirit is given *when we are converted*, instead of being the *agent* by which that conversion is effected—which leaves you for years in doubt whether your child is the object of God's love—and instead of telling it to love Him *because* He has first loved it, has taken it *already* as His own child, is striving with it by His Spirit and will never leave it until every mercy has been despised, every gracious striving resisted, until like a withered, fruitless branch it has been cut off and cast into the fire. . . . I have gathered such strength from this view of the free grace of God that, whenever I am writing or thinking about children, it naturally arises in my mind or on my paper. . . .

No one feels more than I do the advantage of an Industrial branch of the National School, but our Industrial was formed for an entirely different purpose. . . . However I have full confidence in Brooke's firmness. At this crisis you must all be as *economical* as possible.

How worrying all this must be for you, and yet how needful for us are these vexations! Do they not teach us the need of living very near to our Saviour, of feeding day by day upon Him, His life, His words, His presence? Not merely to know *about* Christ—but to know Christ—to realise His personal abiding

love, and to feel that all trial binds us more closely to Him. All outer work must depend for its vitality upon the closeness of our union with the fountain of life. Abiding in Christ and Christ in us. Being one with Christ and Christ with us. What strength is there in the mere dwelling upon those words!

St. John's Parsonage, Seaham Harbour: Mar. 7, 1863.

My dear Miss Cotton,—I must thank you for your letter and the report. I can scarcely believe that our little house, engaged in so much fear and trembling, has really grown into 700*l.* per annum. How many an anxious hour we have had about that school! How often everything seemed against us, and yet how very mercifully God dealt with us! It is a parable of life. At the time when the body is worn, and faith weak, all seems commonplace and full of failure. We look back and say from our hearts, 'He hath done *all* things well.' I often think of the foreign Cathedrals one used to see. They are so surrounded by little dirty houses and shops that the grandeur of the building is quite lost, but go out of the town and stand on the calm hill top and look down upon the whole scene: the old Cathedral rises in all its fair proportions and the little dirty buildings are scarcely visible, or, if seen at all, only help to throw out the old Gothic pile. So is it with our life, when from the quiet of a still hour we look down upon its varied scenes. I am very thankful for the account which you give me of the poor Industrial girl. Is it not worth all the trouble to bring even one back to the Good Shepherd?

To the Rev. T. Wilkinson

Seaham Harbour: Feb. 10, 1863.

If all be well we shall have a nice quiet Confirmation in our own little Church on Sunday afternoon, April 26, and in after years those who have been confirmed will be able to look at the place where they pledged themselves to Christ's service. . . .

Of all the anxious work none is so anxious as preparation for Confirmation; so much depends upon it. The Bishop[1] told me that nearly all the real good which he had seen effected in his ministry had been more or less connected with Confirmation. . . .

I much enjoyed a sketch of the Prince Consort's life. He

[1] Bishop Baring.

must have been a remarkable man. The beauty of usefulness seems to have been his ruling idea. Nothing trifling—nothing too trifling to be great, if done right and in a right spirit. I think that letter to the Duke of Wellington in which he marks out his own path in life is quite perfect. Always to be thinking, living, acting, for the Queen of England, but never to come forward, never to be observed, to move the hands of the clock, but never to attempt to usurp the place of the hands, or appear publicly on the stage of politics. It is a grand character.

I read such a touching little poem the other day. An old man, looking back upon his life, remembers how in early days his mother would lay her hand upon his head as he knelt by her side to pray, and he says that in all his boyish freaks and youthful sins he ever seemed to feel the touch of her who had long before passed away into the land of spirits. Wherever he was, whatever sin he was inclined to commit, before he went to rest, he always seemed to be conscious of that same gentle touch. I feel what he means. Many a time has my dear mother seemed to be so very near to me, and in looking back on the past I cannot help thinking that it was in answer to her prayers that I was so often brought back to higher and holier thoughts.

To the same

Seaham Harbour: April 24, 1863.

Our Confirmation is not yet over. We expect the Bishop to stay with us over next Sunday, on which day it is to take place, for the first time in the Church of St. John's, Seaham Harbour, since the said Church was erected. We have had classes for about seven weeks, and now from hour to hour we have been seeing candidates privately. It has been very anxious, but, thank God, very encouraging work. Many cases have shown the direct work of the Holy Ghost. One or two men of 40 and 50, moral respectable men, weeping to think that they had forgotten God so long and lived in sin by not loving Him with their whole heart and soul. Then some poor girls who had been struggling and trying to be better, and could not get right, listening so anxiously and so thankfully to the Gospel, that Jesus Christ had been wounded for their transgressions and bruised for their iniquities, and that His blood cleanses from all sin.

I have not much time to write, but I do not like leaving your kind letter any longer without a reply, and moreover I have

something to tell you, which I know you will not mention to anyone and which I feel you would like to know. In the middle of this busy week a letter has come from the Bishop (in confidence), offering Bishop Auckland to me. It is a place where there is a great work to be done—10,000 people and about 600*l.* a year. Near to the Bishop, whom I like—near to Mrs. Baring, who is my wife's mother's earliest friend—near to the park for the children—there is of course much to be said in its favour. Then this place is one where I can do capitally so long as Lady Londonderry lives or continues to like me, but if she dies or takes a fancy against me—then the whole scene is changed and my work hindered at every turn. I say nothing about the income, though with so many children that is a consideration ; but the place [Seaham] in itself is of course far from pleasant—cold winds—my wife unable to get out half the winter, &c. But on the other hand, who will get it if I go ? If I do not take Bishop Auckland, the Bishop will put a good man there ; but if I leave, whom will Lady Londonderry appoint ? And yet there is more chance of a good man being appointed while she lives than after she dies—you see the pros and cons. I have leave to postpone all decision until after Confirmation, when I shall weigh the matter and decide. My dear Cara, who is one with me in everything, prays with me that God will help us to do right. I know you will feel for us and with us at this important time.

To the same

Seaham Harbour: May 1, 1863.

You have ere this received my little note, telling you that after a week's consideration I had decided to go to Bishop Auckland. It would be a long history to tell you all the pros and cons, the reasons on one side and the reasons on the other, how I first inclined to go and then wished to stay and then decided to go. Put shortly, the considerations which mainly influenced me were these. An offer from the Bishop of the Diocese to so great a work, sent so unexpectedly and so unsought, seemed very like a call from God. Then the experience which I have gained here could only be used here in a very small degree, because it is often difficult to change, where it would be comparatively easy to begin afresh. Then there was the increase of income, not to be despised by a man with 3½ children. The Bishop to be under, and Mrs. Baring, Car's mother's earliest

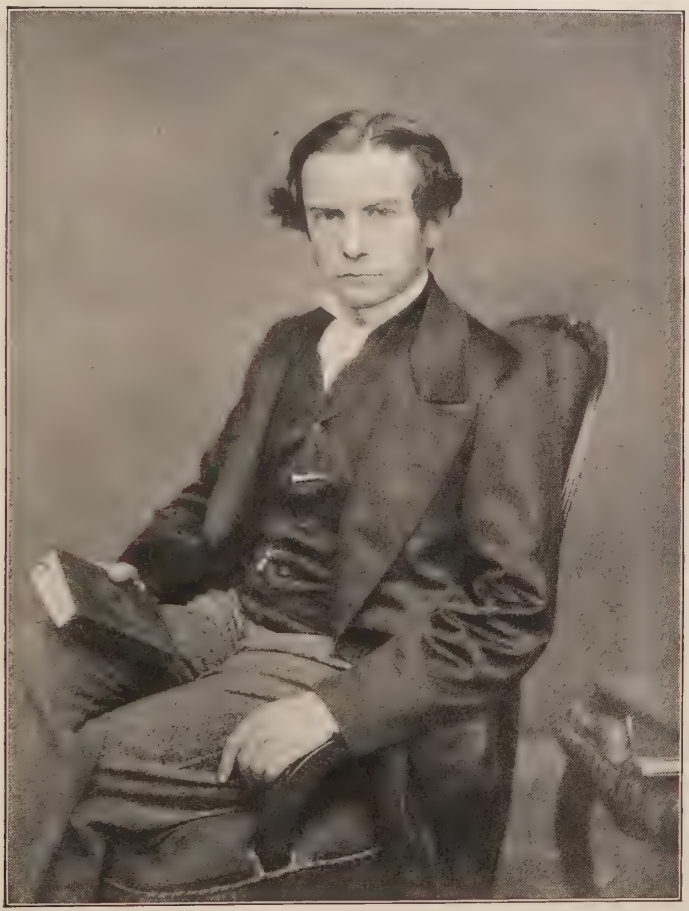


Photo MAULL & FOX.

MR. WILKINSON ABOUT 1858.

friend, for her to be near—all these things weighed with me, and above all a feeling that I ought to go—very very strong. As a poor woman said this morning, 'You know, sir, if you had stayed and then things had gone wrong here, you would have reflected upon yourself for not going when you were called.'

If I had to decide to-night, I should decide the same way, but no words can tell you how miserable it has been to talk with my people since it became known. I will not dwell upon it, for it will only make you sad. I hope and trust that Green will have the offer of the living, and that he may see his way to taking it. When I know more, I will write.

Now about our future home. I have two churches—10,000 people, including 3000 pit people—shall have, I suppose, a steady increase for some years to come, if I live. There are already seven services, either in church or schoolroom, every Sunday. No District Visitors, no Sunday School Teachers—in fact no spiritual life, so far as man can judge, the clergyman tells me. Seven schools, for the most part well endowed, and the Bishop in the position of squire of the parish. The house is near the park gates—not so nice of course as our present home—the rooms smaller, the wood older and more rickety, but fairly comfortable, with a nice garden and pretty view from the drawing-room and study windows. The net value of the living will be, as far as I can make out, about 450*l.*, and judging by my experience in this place, the calls will increase as the work multiplies.

I had a most kind letter from the Bishop this morning, saying, 'I am *much pleased* that you have accepted, &c.', and then telling me not to be disappointed if the fruits be not seen so quickly as at Seaham, and assuring me of his prayers. Another to Car from Mrs. Baring, asking us to take the whole establishment to the palace when the time for moving arrives. The Bishop was very kind too in letting me tell him all about those points in which my views would disagree with his own. In fact his friendship is the brightest spot in the future. Ask me anything which I have left out, as I like to feel that you know all which interests us.

To the Rev. C. Green

[Seaham Harbour] May 19, 1863.

I did indeed receive a short and carefully written letter from Lady L., but its contents were not of a very exhilarating

character. Its substance was that she expected that I at any rate would have felt the importance and responsibility, &c.

My first feeling on receiving it was bitter pain. It seemed the 'unkindest cut of all' that I should be told that I did not realise the importance of the work, nor (by implication) care for my people.

This feeling, thank God, soon passed away and I saw His Hand in it all—partly to show me, in love, how much happier a prospect was before me and so to make me more ready to go, and still more, to give me a lesson which I much needed—to make me look for His approval and rest quiet under any insinuations however galling. A very short time, thank God, made all this clear, and, as if to provide for one's comfort in the minutest respect, the same post brought such a warm kind letter from the Bishop, to say that he was so glad to find that Mr. Green could remain for a time, so as to give me some rest before I began my work afresh. The more I dwell upon God's goodness, the more thoroughly ashamed do I feel that I can ever doubt Him, or ever rebel against His gracious dealings. May He help us to thank as well as pray to Him more.

I had a very happy Sunday. I was seriously ill on Saturday night, but had wonderful strength given me. I preached both morning and evening and I think had hold of the people.

Yesterday of course I had to pay the penalty for the strain of the Sunday, coming at the end of a fortnight's subdued anxiety. The spirit may be made to rest, but the body keeps the marks of the struggle. I shall be thankful when I am fairly away. I am beginning to feel the effect of four classes a week going on now for three months and this mental struggle superadded. In the midst of it all, however, I am helped most mercifully.

So much for egotism. After such a display you will, I hope, never feel any diffidence in giving me any amount of personalities.

I can imagine so well the scene at Holdernesse House. I can almost fancy that I hear the very words which would be used. I am thankful that she is looking at the matter in a right light. I believe her to be really earnest, with far more true religion than she is ever supposed to possess. I look back with much happiness to many a conversation, and feel that one who could speak as she did, will certainly be led by the Holy Spirit to do what is best for my dear people. How much do I see to regret as I look back upon these three years. So far as God is concerned, nothing

but goodness. For myself so much left undone, so much done which should have been left undone and unsaid.

I believe that it is quite impossible to exaggerate the importance of the appointment. Several make no secret of their intention to wait and see, and then, if the result be unsatisfactory, to go to some wonderful man whom the Independents are hoping to secure. All this, mind, is only gossip, but a straw shows which way the wind blows.

I believe that your not being appointed caused much real bitter disappointment, but I am much cheered by the quiet trusting way in which our own people look at it. 'It is in God's hands. He knows what is best. He will do what is best. We must pray more. It leaves us more time to pray.'

I begin to think that God has allowed us to do more real work than I had ever dared to expect.

To the Rev. T. Wilkinson

[August 1863.]

I write a few lines to thank you for yours of yesterday and to tell you what I am doing. I am driven about from pillar to post, at Auckland one day, at Seaham another, at Oswald House a third.

I was instituted on Friday [1] and am to read myself in, if all be well, in one church August 16, in the other on August 23.

The kindness of the Bishop was beyond all expression—so fatherly and affectionate. He did a very kind thing for me. I had engaged a capital curate, a Mr. Palmer of Hartlepool, whom the Bishop likes very much. He is a poor man with a wife and four children. I gave him as large a stipend as I could possibly manage, and promised to raise it after the first year. The Bishop said that the man would feel much more comfortable and would work much better with a good stipend, and added that he always intended as Lord of the Manor to add to my Curate Fund. In short, he offered me 50*l.* per annum, so that I might give Mr. Palmer 150*l.* at once. Was it not kind? It makes it very pleasant for me, as I secure a thoroughly good man, and an efficient preacher, and know that he is not likely to leave me until a good living is offered him.

I start with Myers; Mr. Palmer comes in November, and I am looking about for a third curate, but do not care to have him till about Easter. In the meanwhile I pay one or two men on

[1] July 31, 1863.

Sunday to assist in the services (seven in number, besides surplice duty and schools) and go on quietly during the week, making myself acquainted with the people. The prospect is a very happy one—a glorious old parish church, with a good peal of bells—capital schools, seven in number, all under the clergyman—a kindly feeling, so far as I can hear, towards the new incumbent—in fact, much as I feel the responsibility, and arduous as is the work which lies before me, I am thoroughly thankful that I accepted the offer. I am much better in health, and my Father is wonderfully better, and I have pretty good accounts of Car. Her cough is still troublesome and the Dr. says that she will require great care. She told me of your visit and how kind you had both been to her. It would have been a great disappointment to her if she had not seen you before she left London. . . .

Saturday to Seaham. Sunday we had Holy Communion. It was very enjoyable. Most of my own special friends were there. In the afternoon I went to the Sunday Schools and had a talk with the teachers, all going on well. Nothing is fixed about my successor. The parish seems very disappointed that Green has declined, but there are many difficulties in the way, and I am not sure that he has not arrived at a right decision.

I preached in the evening, on our Lord's words to Peter when the Apostle was sinking in the waves, 'Oh thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?' The church was very full, and I enjoyed the service very much. The choir had learnt a favourite anthem of mine so as to surprise me.

F. A. V. L.[1] was present in the morning and stayed Holy Communion. She also came out in the evening, which was unusual. However, she shirked all idea of seeing me. We had a correspondence on business matters, in which I offered to call, and in a second letter expressed my regret that I had not been able to see her when I called, as I should have much liked to have taken leave of her before I left for my new work. However, it elicited no response and the matter is ended, till she wants duty done at Wynyard, when she will write and ask me, I have no doubt. Poor old lady, she has far more good than many imagined, and has been very kind to us during my residence at Seaham.

On Monday night Green and I had a meeting of the candidates

[1] Frances Anne Vane Londonderry.

whom we had confirmed during our residence at Seaham—a very interesting meeting. . . .

To-day the family have gone to a grand Archery fête at Hardwick. Tom and I are keeping house. He has had a long ride with me on his little pony, and now we have had my luncheon and his dinner and exhausted our stock of conversation.

I am delighted that my Father and Mother are going to you on Tuesday. My Mother is looking forward to it with immense pleasure, and feels with me that it will just set my dear Father all right for the winter.

To the same

B[ishop] A[uckland]: Sept. 7 [1863].

In the afternoon I came back to Auckland and worked away till the 22nd, when the Bishop returned with about 15 nephews and nieces. I had intended to have gone into the parsonage before their arrival, as I could easily have had some rooms prepared, but they wrote me a kind letter from the Lakes, where they were travelling, begging me to remain till after their arrival. I was very glad that I did so, as I had two evenings of very happy talk with the Bishop, and started my work with a full knowledge of the line which he wished me to adopt.

'To go to him for every kind of help that I needed, but to take my own line, work out my own plans, avoid above everything the impression being formed in the parish that because I was appointed by him, I was only his nominee'—this was in brief the line which he marked out for me, assuring me that he hoped and *prayed* that God would strengthen me for my work.

On the 23rd I read myself in and preached my first sermon in St. Ann's, the Chapel of Ease in the town. They were all very kind about my sermon. It was on 'I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. . . .'

On Wednesday who should turn up but my old friend Chapman, my fellow curate at Kensington. His Father was coming North, and he came on spec. to find us. He found us in utter confusion, but he put off his coat like a man and set to work and helped us. We are now comparatively settled. Car or I will write you a description of the house, which we both like. The parish is a glorious field for work, but as yet there has not been very much of a satisfactory nature effected. I feel the difference most at the week-day services. At Seaham we had nearly 300 for prayers: here we have 3. There an average of

80 or 90 communicants once a fortnight : here between 30 and 40 once a month.

However, *speriamo*. God bless you both.

His private diary during the Seaham period reveals the young clergyman's determined and unwearied efforts at self-discipline. Every day the hour of rising in the morning is recorded, and at the end of each week the average is struck. During most of the period a note is made of the time given each day to Morning, Mid-day and Evening Prayers respectively. Nothing is allowed to pass unheeded, either in the way of spiritual experience, or of moral trial. His was never the case of the keeper of other people's vineyards who did not keep his own.

1861. *Jan.* 17. Spoke to-day to nobody, and it was ' a day without a line.'

Feb. 13. The time of trial for which last week's happiness was to prepare me has come. Wandering thoughts, &c., &c. Sermon all day : dreary in self, but helped in writing. . . . Much helped in sermon at ½ past 7. Tired, but happier.

Feb. 18. I must begin to think more about the Evening devotions. May God help it this Lent.

Feb. 21. A weak powerless state, unstrung in body and mind. How much I depend on feelings ; how much do I look to self. Oh to be really nothing to myself, that Christ may be formed in me.

March 22. Worried to death about nothing. Feel that it is nothing, but equally worried.

March 23. Very nervous. Sick headache, Unable to do anything. Had a walk. Then sat quiet for a little. Then just trusted myself to my Father, and He helped me, and in 40 minutes I did with pleasure what in three hours I have sometimes been unable to do. God is good. Blessed are all they who trust in Him.

July 8. I thank my God for yesterday. Nearer to Him, and feeling more of the love of Christ than I have done. Seeing more clearly that for peace I must not seek the world's peace, that to have rest I must be Christ's [and] like Him. Thank God, I know now that He lives and loves me. May I love more to serve.

Sept. 23. I am beginning now to realise that God will have

me trust Him even in the darkness, that He wishes to make me believe at all costs.

Oct. 3. How hard to go on steadily when the body is weak, to persevere in spite of everything. 'Endured as seeing Invisible One.'

Oct. 5. Bad average. There is too much indecision and wavering in my religious life. I want a more steady persevering course through evil report and good report, to bear in mind that I am Christ's.

Oct. 12. This week a week of great trial to me. The world-spirit made itself felt, and nearly overcame. I cried unto the Lord, and He gave me the opportunity of undoing the past. May I now be kept from it. A daily struggle will be waged in crucifying self. How weak, how nothing I am.

Nov. 21. I have been taught by a painful though salutary discipline that bodily health must be considered. I have been quite unstrung by working on Monday.

Nov. 23. Suffered painfully in overwork. God, however, has been very good. May He bless me to-morrow, as He has done in the week. How often, when there has been a time of great spiritual darkness, and yet we have persevered in prayer, does there come suddenly a time of light and refreshing from above.

1862. *Jan.* 31. More light shining round me. Never since that time in last year when I found peace have I altogether lost my footing. This has been a very dreary week, but still different. It has been '*My* God,' though a feeling of forsaking. How very wonderfully God teaches us. How He will not allow us to be impatient or fretful or desponding, or anything which is displeasing to Him, without causing His displeasure to be felt.

Feb. 4. Find that laziness and want of system ruins my religious life, and yet what blessings!

Feb. 17. A trial from my chimney being so smoking. Anything else I think would be less; but it is the little annoyance which I am to have, and He can help me to bear it quietly and patiently. If I only remember that comfort, ease, self-gratification are not the ends of existence, then I may be wiser.

April 21, *Easter Monday.* This Monday the devil tried hard to undo the good of Passion Week, and, if it had not been for the love of my Lord, he would have succeeded. . . . I learn the

need of great watchfulness after seasons of peculiar blessedness.

April 23. The same—dark and dreary. Partly, I believe, bodily reaction, partly reaction of spiritual excitement, partly a teaching from on High to prepare me for my holiday. Just as now it is dark and the only hope is to do as a duty what I cannot do as a pleasure, so will it be then. Never let me forget that there must be an entire surrender of the heart, in joy and in sorrow, in dark and in sunny hours. I have been taught that the battle is to be fought in short and oft-repeated rounds.

May 12. Another year of my life passed away. How manifold are the mercies which I have received during this time. Praised be God for His blessing on my parish—a second curate given, the alterations in the church finished; so much done for me by God's boundless mercy. Then my own soul. After that night in which Postlethwaite was here,[1] how it pleased God to reveal His Son in me, and how the whole tone of my ministry has been deepened since then. Yesterday a new light as to daily forgiveness and daily resting on Christ was revealed to me. But oh how many sins and failures, how much left undone! Lord, revive Thy work.

May 14. Now that God in His goodness has allowed me to have a holiday, and has so revealed Jesus to me that I feel the dear Saviour will help me if I look to Him, I wish to make all my tour according to His Will. My plan is at least 20 minutes before breakfast, and an hour in the day, and a quarter of an hour at night. May He help me to carry this into effect as a general rule. To do it altogether may be impossible.

June 20. How many lessons have been taught me [during the holiday]! . . . I have learned also the real blessing of Holy Communion, that it is a great means of spiritual strength, that nothing has a greater effect in counteracting the worldly tendencies of our nature. I have learned also that body and soul and spirit are all to be considered, and are all cared for by God.

July 30. Lonely and dreary in spirit. It is my own fault. I have not rested the body, and have therefore done nothing. With my prayers also I have been negligent. In my ideas I have been worldly. In everything I have been drifting away; but in Christ I can return. In my Saviour I can come back

[1] Apparently July 7, 1861.

and be certain of acceptance. Oh, the love of God, the wonderful condescension which He shows to His wayward children! I would rather suffer all I do or can suffer, than be away from Him.

1863. *Feb.* 8. Let me more and more accustom myself to prepare for Communion by prayer and conscious reference to Christ. To make my religion more of a business, but oh, to pray earnestly that I may feel it a privilege. . . . I feel more and more that the children of the Kingdom are pledged to be missionaries.

Feb. 25. I do not like to write, because I am so weak, but yet it is as wrong not to acknowledge God's goodness as to be proud. I do feel more of that goodness than I ever did. . . . Oh, there is now coming into my heart a feeling of being reconciled with my God which prompts me to do all and dare all for Him. How can I thank Him enough for that visit to Coatham. Blessed be His name. 'Gather My saints together unto Me those who have made a covenant with Me by *sacrifice*.'

THIRD PERIOD

BISHOP AUCKLAND AND ST. PETER'S, WINDMILL STREET

CHAPTER I

BEGINNING WORK AT BISHOP AUCKLAND

WILKINSON'S ministry at Seaham Harbour, as he said of his ministry at Kensington, had been that of a man left to learn by his own experience. It had something of the air of the amateur. The ministry at Bishop Auckland was otherwise. Not that it was in a disagreeable sense professional; Wilkinson never became professional in the sense of mechanically following a recognised routine. But at Bishop Auckland he worked as one who has acquired the science of souls, and who sees clearly his methods of applying it, and of applying it on a fairly broad scale. In other respects there was little difference. 'There was the same aim,' writes one who was his chief coadjutor in both places, 'the same spirit, the same principle of administration.'

It was the eve of St. Bartholomew's Day, 1863, when he read himself in. The Bishop was away from home, and put the Castle and eighteen servants at his disposal. Mrs. Wilkinson also was away. Her son Henry had only lately been born, in London—Thomas and Constance had been born before the move from Kensington, and George during the time at Seaham. Mrs. Wilkinson had strongly urged her husband to accept the offer of Bishop Auckland. She felt that he was killing himself at Seaham, and that the same amount of work in a larger place would carry further. As soon as she was well enough to travel, he brought her to the new home, and her eager heart went out

at once to the noble old church of St. Andrew, and the Park close by the house, and to the wide stretch of the parish, and all the people in it.

To the Rev. T. Wilkinson, from Mrs. Wilkinson

Bishop Auckland: Sept. 16 [1863].

MY VERY DEAR UNCLE,—I now consider that I have been here long enough to tell you something about the place, as I know you always like to hear. . . .

First of all, I think we are both delighted with the place. I *do* like it so much, such a change from Seaham; pretty country, charming walks, warmer climate, beautiful old church, less smoke, nice neighbours, better house. Of course the great responsibility of such a large and important parish must weigh upon George's mind at times, and naturally I feel much for him also. Then there seems such an utter deadness about spiritual things, so little desire to *do* anything among the people. Only one Sunday School teacher, no District Visitors, no anything; after the warm hearty zeal of Seaham, it is dispiriting at first. But I trust God will help George's work here, as He did at Seaham. Already things look brighter. George has met with a few really good people; he has had a few promises of Sunday School teachers, &c. It will be very happy when he finds his curates, and can really get the parish rigging into order, and set sail in good earnest. The congregations are increasing, and everybody tells me how very much they enjoy George's preaching. Every time I see the Bishop's wife, she tells me how delighted they all are with George's sermons. Is it not satisfactory? . . .

I will begin with the most important member of this house, my husband. I assure you he has much grown in dignity since he became Incumbent of St. Andrew's, Auckland. . . . Seriously I am dreadfully proud of him, and I know you think with me that he is not so bad; *non c'è male*, as you said to George in the presence, and of, your humble servant the first time you saw her. I am thankful to say he is pretty well, much better than when you saw him.

This parish is so unlike Seaham in every way. Our Parsonage is in the Market Place, which is a rather fine square, with the Town Hall, and St. Ann's Church in the centre. On Thursdays and Saturdays the Market is held; opposite to our windows

are the fruit and vegetable market stalls. It is great fun, I can look out of my bedroom window and choose my fruit, or whatever I wish to buy, and then send the cook across the way to procure it. I find the Market cheaper than the shops.

From this Market Place run streets in all directions, and out of these streets innumerable filthy courts, full of vice, I fear ; certainly the back streets are as dirty as dear old Roman streets. The town contains about 7000. Then we have several collieries two or three miles out of the town, and an outlying village or two. The population of the parish is I believe over 10,000. Though these outlying districts are inconvenient as far as work goes, yet there is one to me very pleasant side to them. When George goes to them, which he has done two or three times a week, he must take a good country walk to get to them, and I have the great pleasure of walking with him, and when we arrive at the village, he goes to one person while I go to another, so that I have the happiness of feeling I am really helping him. It is not often duty and pleasure can be followed at the same moment. At Seaham I scarcely ever got a walk with George, for he felt he could not spare the time from his work—and when I now and then did go with him to the bottle works, I had to walk along the lines, among the coal dust, tearing my petticoats against the broken lines, or greasing them against the wheels of the rope lines, with every now and then an engine running after me and frightening me out of my wits. Here the walks are so pretty, across nice grass fields.

We have about a dozen what the shopkeepers call ' families ' in the town, which is rather a bore. Still I am glad they are here, for I hope they will help George in working the parish in time. A lady does so much more good in teaching Sunday Schools and district visiting than people of a lower class can do with the poor. We dined with some of the nicest people here last Thursday—a Mr. and Mrs. Trotter—and we had a pleasant evening, very, and the girls have promised to teach in the school or do anything that George wishes. We are longing to show you our beautiful old church—St. Andrew's. . . .

We had a most touching sight there yesterday. Four men were killed in one of the Pits last Saturday by the upsetting of a cage. Yesterday they were all buried in one grave. As there seemed to be a great many people intending to follow them to the grave, George thought it would be a good opportunity to address the people, as he might never have them all gathered

together again. More even came than George expected; about 800 men and 100 women filled the church (nearly all in black—such a sad effect, the four coffins placed side by side). After reading the lesson, George gave them an extemporary sermon which lasted about ten minutes. It was very earnest, and I think took hold of the people. They looked astonished and pleased when he began to speak to them. I do trust it went deeper, and that some may have been really brought to think by it.

St. Ann's is a nice little church holding about 700. George preaches there extempore every Sunday evening, and takes the two churches by turn on Sunday mornings. The Bishop and all his household come to St. Ann's on Sunday evenings. He is so kind to George. It is so nice to be able to talk freely to one's Bishop. It is a great strength to George having him to talk to. He seems to wish to help and support George in every way. He and Mrs. Baring seem much beloved in the town, though it appears to me that he is not so much valued as he should be. I think he does a great deal of good. . . .

I am thankful to say I am quite strong and very well indeed, and our children are growing into fine creatures; this place seems to agree with them well. It is such a comfort having the Park only about 100 yards from our house. We have all the enjoyment of a beautiful park without the expense of keeping it up—very lucky people, *I* say. . . .

How badly I am writing! but I have scribbled till my hand is tired, and here comes George to take me out, so I must say good-bye. I have not time to read what I have scribbled, so hope I have told no fibs.

To the Rev. C. Green

Parsonage, B. A.: 1863.

We are in the midst of the first stage of parochial experience, popularity—letters of puff in the paper, &c. However, underneath this is a little real work—a few who are coming to me regularly for teaching and are in earnest and will be ready I trust for Christmas Communion. Palmer and Myers are getting on with House to House Visiting.

I have an idea of taking the Town Hall for a night, advertising far and wide address to young men, and throwing myself upon them for Church work of all kinds. However, I must pause and think and pray before I take so bold a step.

The month of September saw a venture.

To the Rev. T. Wilkinson, from Mrs. Wilkinson

[Sept. 17, 1863.]

George and I are so happy to-day. Last Tuesday afternoon, George, Mr. Myers, and I started for Black Boy Colliery, a pit district about one and a half miles from here. We took with us a heap of papers that George had had printed, telling the people that he should have a Bible lecture in the schoolroom every Wednesday Evening at 7. We each took a certain number of houses, where we went in and talked to the people and asked them to go, and left papers with them. . . .

Last night to his great delight he found the great schoolroom crammed with men, so attentive. There were many obliged to stand, for the seats were all full. Is not this encouraging ?

Extract from Mr. Wilkinson's Diary

Wednesday.—Beginning of weekly lecture at Black Boy. Very doubtful in the beginning. C. C. W.,[1] Myers, and I went together, took printed bills, left them at the houses, called on the people, distributed them through the cottages, persuaded the people to come. On the Wednesday, Myers had tea with us at six. After tea we had prayer, and then in the strength of the Lord we went forth and found all our anticipations exceeded. The room was crowded. The great majority were men. They listened with intense attention, and God gave me liberty of speech. Blessed for ever be His name, and yet I sinned in the morning with careless prayers. . . . How evil is my nature ! Oh Holy Spirit, quicken this dull, sluggish nature, and make me more active and earnest and trusting. 'Thou continuest holy, oh Thou worship of Israel.'

To the Rev. T. Wilkinson

Parsonage, B. A. : Nov. 17, 1863.

I had a very interesting Sunday with Green before he left the North for a curacy which he has taken in London. He came over to spend a Communion Sunday with me, and it so happened that it was the anniversary of his first Sunday at Seaham after his ordination in 1860. It was almost overpowering as we looked back upon all the blessings which we had received in our

[1] His way of denoting Mrs. Wilkinson.

work during those three years—the trials which we had been strengthened to bear, the manifold anxieties which at the time appeared so overpowering and yet passed away like the morning cloud. . . . It was a day full of thankful retrospects and made us, I hope, more trusting for the future. . . .

I have had much bother about curates. I have had many applications, and been writing on the average seven hours a week to them. One man whose testimonials were perfect, and whose letters were satisfactory, seemed likely to suit. However, I never engage a man without seeing him. Before asking him to come down for a visit I asked a friend to find out about him and discovered that his age was 70, that he rouged and wore a wig. So much for testimonials.

My Wednesday lecture is, I am thankful to say, going on capitally. The opposition does us no harm. I have now a good steady regular attendance. It tires me very much. I am regularly fagged when I come home. Two and a half miles there, ditto back, and an hour's speaking with my whole self thrown into it, take a great deal out of one. However, I believe it is doing real lasting good. . . .

Car has had a bad cough, but is now quite well again. I never saw her so happy as she is here. She delights in the place, has a week-day class in the school, and then teaches her own children on the Sunday.

To the Rev. C. Green

B. A.: Nov. 5, 1863.

I purposely confine myself to an account of the curacy and a reply to your questions. I feel sure that God will guide you as seems best to Him and I am very anxious not in any way to influence your decision.

As to *drawbacks*.

1. Missionary work amongst miners trained in Dissent.

2. A great deal of the old-fashioned State Churchmanship which you so much dislike.

3. The fact that I should always regard it as a duty not to go dead against the Bishop, and so to make a clerical scandal, even if I did not entertain the warm personal regard which I feel for him.

4. That a Church development in the true sense of the word will be very slow.

Advantages

1. The miners are old-fashioned, respectable men, who have been for many years in the same place.

2. There is a stir in the parish. I have proofs that if we had the right men we might with God's blessing go in and possess the land.

3. The curacy is likely to be permanent, as if I live I am likely to be here for many years.

4. 120*l.* in the North=140*l.* in the South and is a good stipend.

5. That the work of the Church is to be done in the *North*. The South have heard it all ; the North have never known what the Church's Mission and message is. . . .

I find that good, earnest visiting is all that is needed. I can keep as much preaching up as is needed. The pitmen say they only want a visitor and a friend.

To the same

Parsonage, B. A.: Nov. 24, 1863.

My dear Green,—Your letter this morning was the first account which I received of your sad bereavement.[1]

Myers and I went yesterday to administer Holy Communion to a poor woman and agreed to remember you in it, under the idea that you would be writing to Mr. Adams. Little did we think that you were hastening to the North, with a twofold need for spiritual comfort.

I cannot help thinking of poor Christian's Hill Difficulty with the spring at its foot, when I recall the account which you gave me of your All Saints Day and the spirit in which you were enabled to realise the Communion of Saints. When the first sorrow has passed, you will feel that there is a more real communion now than there could be on earth. *There* are no barriers to separate the Lord's people from each other. From those calm heights they look down upon us with perfect sympathy and forget that we are not following the Lamb along the same road which they traversed while passing through this vale of trial.

You remember the beautiful account of Wesley's dream—his asking at the gates of Paradise for Wesleyans, &c., and the answer, ' We know nothing here of any of those names. The only name of which we know anything here is Christian ; we are

[1] In the death of his mother, a Congregationalist.

all Christians here, and of these we have a great multitude which no man can number, of all nations and kindreds and people and tongues.'

Dwelling upon your sorrow in my walk this afternoon, it has struck me that in this thought is your real comfort—a more true, unbroken, happy communion than there could, under your peculiar circumstances, ever be on earth. Yet I know that there is another side, and that these sad hours will bring back many trying scenes in your life.

My own dear Mother is now often near to me. It was not so till lately, but these last few years it has been a real communion. I have often felt that she was *very* near.

There is another subject on which I must say a word. I feel that this is a very important crisis in your life. This year is, I feel sure, a season which will leave its mark upon your character for ever. I dare not interpret its teaching. I can only pray, as I try to do most earnestly, that He who is our Lord and our Elder Brother will teach you how the way of the Lord is to be prepared; He knows, and He alone, if there be a valley which has to be exalted, a mountain and hill made low; and Blessed be His Name, He can make our crooked ways straight and our rough places plain, so that His Glory may be revealed in us—a real Christmas—a true Incarnation, Christ dwelling in us, and we in Christ. . . .

Could you not come over? We can give you a bed, or I can be at home for a couple of hours—any time. It would be a comfort to us all to pray together before the solemn Advent-tide.

May He come into your heart to-morrow with His own heavenly comfort.

To the same

Parsonage, B. A.: Dec. 8, 1863.

I have no fears as to the future. We have all had much teaching at Seaham, and I feel that our Blessed Lord will teach and guide us all. He will humble where we need to be humbled, but only that after humbling He may take us by the hand and raise us up again.

I do not spend time in repeating what you know already, but I must tell you, my dear Green, how thankful I feel that we have been once more brought together. Oh let us pray for each other that the fruit of our Seaham teaching may be

seen in yet deeper earnestness and closer union with our Blessed Lord.

I came back from Seaham full of joy. There were one or two disappointments, but the whole visit made one feel how real the work had been. The *burst* of responses, the humble, earnest devotion of the people. We shall have a long hour's talk when you do come.

All asked about you. Ridley and Grant were on their death-bed. It was a privilege to see them. Calm, Churchlike utterances, but a strange, heavenly tone and expression which I never before witnessed. Several were struck with it in Ridley. It was more like the light of Heaven shining through his face.

To a parishioner

Parsonage: Dec. 12, 1863.

My dear Miss ——,—I send you a hymn which I think you will like. I have known something of that dull, dreary feeling, when we are not actually ill, but are without energy, and unable to find any enjoyment in our daily occupations.

I believe that it is a greater trial than a serious illness. The latter is at once regarded as sent from above. We summon to our help all our Christian trust, and we take it as part of the dealings of that Father who chastens every son whom He receiveth.

A general feeling of weakness is not important enough to be considered a heavenly trial. We are able to do everything as at other times. It is only God and our own heart who can tell how very heavily, at such seasons, every duty weighs upon us.

At these times, moreover, we are by our very illness often predisposed to impatience, and the sorrow for our impatience depresses our spirit, and renders us unable to derive our wonted comfort from Prayer and the Bible and Holy Communion. In fact, we experience the same change as that which passed over the spirit of Elijah, who at one time could stand alone against 450 prophets of Baal, at another lay down in despair and prayed God to take away what He deemed to be a useless, wasted life.

If the bow which has been thus drawn *entirely* at a venture is being at all directed by our Lord, I am sure that you will allow me to write freely to you.

We all know how by repenting and believing in the Saviour we enter into the narrow road which leads to life.

Having thus been changed and become as little children we have need indeed to thank our Heavenly Father. Only, we must remember that He does not wish us to continue as little children. He desires to train us up into the fulness of the stature of the manhood of Christ. He does not tell us to remain satisfied with being pardoned, but urges us to press forward, that we may grow in grace, that we may be edified and built up in our most holy faith, that we may be conformed to the image of Christ; that, as He died and rose again, so we, the true living members of His body, may die to self and rise again unto righteousness; nay, that Christ Himself may be so formed in us that we shall be able to say 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.'

This education is very trying. Our Lord does not lay it upon us until we are sure of our position as Christians, able by experience to trust His love and to believe that He does all things well. Then He begins to whisper in our hearts 'If anyone will come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.'

This crucifixion of self is accomplished, for the most part, by trial in some form or other. Disappointment, poverty, bereavement, bodily weakness, and so forth: these are the means by which we are made like to Him who was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

Even as the sculptor first hews the marble out of the quarry, and then with repeated blows of his chisel hews out of the shapeless block the statue which he is modelling, even so does our Heavenly Father by His own free grace take us out of the dark mine of Satan's Kingdom, and, having so rescued us, begins with firm yet tender hand to conform us to the image of His own dear Son. Blow after blow, trial after trial, disappointment after disappointment, if need be, are laid upon us. He loves us too much to spare us any pain if by that pain we can be made more like to our Divine Elder Brother, created as it were afresh after His Heavenly likeness. Now comes the testing time of the spiritual life. Now comes the crisis upon which depends in a great measure whether we are merely saved or able to go up and possess the glorious inheritance which belongs to us as members of Christ.

We may either bear the blow and writhe beneath it, or we may recognise the hand by which it is inflicted. We may either carry the cross wearily in a desponding, half-murmuring spirit, or we may kneel down and take it up cheerfully, saying 'It is from my

Father. Thy will, not mine, be done.' We may either fret because we are weak and unable to pray and unable to experience the joy of believing, or we may say,

O Lord, my God, do Thou Thy holy will—
I will lie still—
I will not stir, lest I forsake Thine arm
And break the charm
Which lulls me, clinging to my Father's breast
In perfect rest.

We may either allow it to pass away unimproved or day by day we may pray ' Oh, my Saviour, teach me all the lessons which Thou wouldst have me learn, any duty which I am neglecting, any sin which I am indulging! Help me to derive all the benefit from this trial which Thou wouldst have me receive. Help me to be quiet, patient, trusting. Help me in every weary hour, when I can neither read nor pray, at least to enter more fully into Thy life of suffering, to feel the lifelong trial which Thou didst endure for my salvation. When I am weak and wearied let me think, So felt my Saviour when He was wearied with the burden and heat of the day, worn out with bodily fatigue and mental trial and spiritual depression.'

I trust that you may be able so to use this season of trial that you may experience in your own soul that, although no chastening *at the time* is joyous, but grievous, nevertheless *afterward* it yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby, to those, that is, who receive and use it as I have hinted above. . . .

Do not trouble to answer this letter. If it does not apply now, it may at some future time.

I am only thankful that our Lord has so soon allowed me to feel for you all and to write to you as your Pastor.

Believe me, dear Miss ——,
Very sincerely yours,
G. Howard Wilkinson.

To the Rev. T. Wilkinson

Parsonage, Bishop Auckland : Dec. 23, 1863.

Car is at the head of twenty-five young ladies, and they have been working all day for the last week in making decorations of all kinds and forms for our two churches. They promise to be very beautiful. I am, also, in hopes that some lasting

good will be the result of their work. Car has thrown herself very heartily into it and drawn people together who never had spoken before, and little piques are being removed, and little jealousies vanishing, and little hills of pride being cast down, before the Christmas anthem sounds in their ears, with its promise of glad tidings for *all*. This afternoon, as they meet for their afternoon work, I am going to thank them for their assistance and to give them a little address. I hope to take up the work which they have been doing and use it as a sort of parable to inculcate *union*, *sympathy*, &c. . . .

From the more general view I shall pass on to show how only in the Church is it possible for this idea to be thoroughly carried out. The very essence of Dissent is to divide—to separate. It stands only upon the foundation of a protest. Hence as a matter of course it leads its better people to think mainly of their own souls. To get saved is the great thought. The Church (*in theory*) tells its ministers to bring, if possible, each soul to a real saving faith in Christ before it is confirmed. Then, when it is admitted to Holy Communion, the very name implies that it is admitted to a *Community* of interests and of sympathies. This is the whole idea of the Church. . . .

Then I intend to put it to them—Why is it that there is more sympathy, as a matter of fact, between Dissenters than amongst many Churchpeople? *Answer*. Because we do not value our privileges, do not work *together*, *pray* for each other, are too *stand off*, &c. . . .

My Black Boy lecture goes on capitally—a great many now go regularly. I had another lecture in another part of the parish a few weeks ago which was crowded. This, however, was only once in a way, as I cannot continue too much at once. . . .

The Bishop is very kind, and all is going on happily. The papers fill up blank spaces with complimentary remarks, written in the worst English and framed with the worst taste, but still a shade better than abuse. Butter is better than vinegar.

To the same

Parsonage, B. A.: Jan. 7, 1864.

My Wednesday lecture is changed to Tuesday, as we have a service in church on Wednesday evenings, but it is not doing quite so well as I could wish. The Christmas feastings have unsettled some, I fear. However, I have no reason to complain,

as, one by one, a few are coming to me in earnest to be taught and guided, and I am slowly and steadily seeing the communicants increase.

The Bishop is as kind as ever, always ready to help where the help is needed. For instance, next Sunday I am going, please God, to preach a Propagation of the Gospel sermon in the morning at Durham and at Wingate Chapel in the afternoon, and he preaches for me here to relieve me. He gave a treat to all our Sunday School children this Christmas, and showed them a wonderful magic lantern afterwards.

Dear Car seems happier in her new home than I have ever seen her. The people all draw to her, and Mrs. Baring told her the other day how much everyone liked her. We are trying hard to draw the people more to each other, and to break down little piques and ' stand off ' sort of nonsense.

To the same

The Parsonage, B. A. : Feb. 22, '64.

I gave a lecture on Palestine last Tuesday in our large Town Hall for the benefit of our Mechanics' Institute. My Father came over, the room was crowded, the people were pleased, and the whole thing was a success. Yesterday the Bishop had his ordination in my church, and I preached the ordination sermon. He spoke very kindly about it afterwards. In fact, nothing can exceed his kindness to me—always thinking of some little thing by which he can show his interest in my work. For instance, I have meetings every fortnight of my Sunday School Teachers and give them papers of questions. He asked me the other day about the expense of these things, as he wished me not to be troubled by such charges ; that he was the Squire, had a larger purse than mine, liked to help, &c., &c.

Green came the Sunday before last, so that we are now all together, Green, Myers, Brown and myself. Brown is in the South part of the district and has now relieved me of my Black Boy lecture. He is carrying it on very well. I have indeed reason to be thankful to God for that lecture. Almost the first evening that I spoke there, the Holy Spirit brought home something that I said to one man who was present. It was the beginning of what I think is a real change of heart. He has gathered a few others around him and is like a lay curate for

us in that part, brings up the people to the lecture, looks after those who are beginning to be in earnest, comes at once for the clergyman, &c., so that a little centre of life is being formed in that part of the parish. Brown meets the few who are earnest once a week for Bible reading and prayer for the parish. Then in Auckland I am at home every Monday morning and Friday evening to see any who come. I have some now who have come week after week for ten or twelve weeks. It is intensely interesting leading them on step by step to see the holiness of God, their own sin, the need of a Saviour, the work of the Saviour, &c. Some of course fall away, but one by one gives up his heart to God, and then joins a little class which I have of men who wish to show their thankfulness by praying and working for others.

So runs on our life, quietly and happily, with many disappointments, and much to regret in one's own shortcomings, but with ever-increasing cause for thankfulness to Him who is above all and from whom all blessings come.

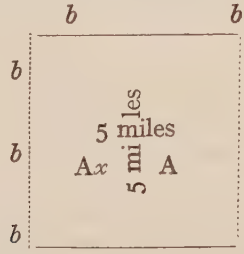
I have been having some of my old Seaham friends over for a Sunday. One time, one of my bottle-makers, another a carpenter who did us much service in old days. It was curious to see how all the social distinctions seemed to be lost sight of in the higher and deeper union which bound us together. As they sat with us at dinner, we felt how much more real refinement there was in them than in many of the rich snobs who would have been offended if they had been asked to meet them. It came upon me the other day with a force that I cannot describe—Our Lord when He was on earth was really to all outward appearance only a working man, only the carpenter's son—in the eyes of those who looked merely at the outward appearance. It is very strange, is it not? when we try to realise it—Hungry, thirsting, wearied, sorrowful. He is no High Priest who cannot be touched with a feeling of our weakness, but one who was tempted, in *all* points, as we are, yet without sin.

To the same

The Parsonage, Bishop Auckland: May 2, 1864.

I must give you a line before you cross the Channel, to wish you God speed and a safe return. We are all flourishing, children much improved, Car in good spirits, and my own old body in a pretty average state of repair. It is a difficult

parish and requires a good deal of consideration. You will see the main difficulties by this little plan.



A represents the Town Church. A*x* is the Parish Church. The greater part of my population, say seven out of ten thousand, are grouped around the Town Church and form the population of Bishop Auckland. This Town Church is far too small and is consequently never thoroughly filled. Those who have not a seat will not go, and of course it often happens that some of the seat-holders are absent. The Parish Church, on the other hand, which is amply sufficient, is so far from the town that in wet weather no one except the pit men who live around it are able to attend. I need not say that a great deal of good is done at both churches. The Town Church would appear to a stranger to be crammed, but from what I have said you will see one of my difficulties. The second is of a different kind. (*b*) represents five hamlets or collieries at different extremities of the parish. Four out of these five hamlets are distant respectively 2, $2\frac{1}{2}$, $2\frac{3}{4}$, $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles from any church. We have a weekly lecture at each, but to do the work thoroughly there ought to be a Mission Church with full Sunday Service in each. There are my two main difficulties.

The Bishop would have helped me to have cut off one of these hamlets and to have made it into a separate parish, but this would have done little good and would have robbed the parish of one unspeakable advantage, namely the fact that there is only *one* incumbent. You have not a High Churchman at one end, and a Low Churchman at another. All who go to church hear me or my curates, and are not perplexed by conflicting and often contradictory teaching.

The blessings which I am receiving in my parish are very great. Amongst the most interesting part of my work is that which lies in individual cases. I stay at home every Monday

morning and Friday evening to see all, rich or poor, who like to come. In this way I have had personal dealing with a great many of my congregation; one brings another and he in turn brings a third, and so the circle is enlarged. I will give you rather a curious instance. Soon after I came, Colonel Stobart, who lives in this neighbourhood, asked me to go to the opening of his Mechanics' Institute. I felt it a great bore to go to that sort of work, when I had so much that seemed more important to do in my own parish. However, I wished to oblige him and went to help him by giving an address. Amongst the audience was a mason. Next morning the address was talked over in their yard, and he said to a man named Armitage, 'You live in Auckland and like to hear; you go and hear Mr. W.; you will be satisfied.' Armitage, who had been living carelessly in drink and idleness for 15 years, went to church, and went again. As he was going the second time, I happened to pass him and began to talk to him, and ended by inviting him to my Friday evening. He came, and in time cast in his lot with us. Whether he will stand God only knows. At present, he is a regular, earnest communicant. He brought four other men. One of these men has gathered together eight women who had been impressed by what they had heard in church. These are now formed into a Bible Class, and put under Mr. Green's care to be taught and prepared for Holy Communion. So you see all this has sprung from that little address at Col. Stobart's which was given so much against my will. I thought that I was wasting time. More good has in reality been done by it than by a regular sermon. God's ways are not as our ways, nor God's thoughts as our thoughts. . . .

I return the papers. The appropriate text is capital. It reminds me of poor Mr. ———¦ at ———. He had left a page behind and he came to 'and Paul said' in his sermon. Five times it was nervously repeated—'and Paul said—and Paul said—I have lost my page'—and then he left a blank and went on to the next page. The only words which St. Paul could never have said were 'I have lost my page.' . . .

A step onwards was taken on Whitsunday, 1864. Since that time open-air preaching has become common enough in the Church of England; but in 1864, as Mr. Green says, 'such a thing as a clergyman standing up by the wayside to preach to the

careless and unconverted was, since John Wesley's day, a thing unheard of in those coalfields of the north.'

To the Rev. T. Wilkinson

Parsonage, Bishop Auckland : June 2 [1864].

Many thanks for all your kind wishes on my Birthday. I know how you feel them, and it is a great happiness to me to think of all your kind feelings for me and all the kindness that I have received from you.

Everything here is going on much as usual. We had a great day on Whitsunday. The Parish Church has never been opened in the evening, the want of gas making it impossible to use it in the winter. However, as the afternoon service was so badly attended, we thought that, for the summer months, we would change it, and try the effect of the evening. We thought that it might attract the pit people who live around it, and also that many who would not go to the Town Church might be tempted by the walk to go to the Parish Church. Then came the question—How to stir up the 800 or 1000 people who live within a stone's throw of the church. They are the most degraded of all our population, and handbills, &c., seemed likely to be only wasted upon them. So, at last, after much consultation, we determined that for once we would try open-air preaching. Then came the question—How was it to be managed so as to attract the people and yet not to make it like the Dissenters' outdoor preaching to which they are so accustomed.

At last we hit upon the following plan, which, with the blessing of a lovely day, proved, thank God, a complete success. We all put on our surplices and full church robes, and went out in solemn procession from the vestry. In front were 20 children. Then came the choir. Then followed my men Sunday School Teachers. Then one of the Churchwardens, and then all the clergy. The choir were singing

> Hark! a thrilling voice is sounding,
> 'Christ is nigh,' it seems to say;
> 'Cast away the dreams of darkness,
> Oh, ye children of the day!'

The people came out of their houses. The procession swelled till we reached a large open square in the middle of the village. There a little raised platform had been fixed, on which

I stood and spoke for about half an hour. It was a striking sight. The grand old church about 200 yards off, with its trees just showing their fresh spring foliage, the clear blue sky above, and this crowd of poor, lost-looking creatures—well dressed, but looking so hard and cold and earthly.

The substance of the sermon was this. God willeth all men to be saved—God, the God above that clear blue sky. The God who made wind and storm, thunder and lightning—God before whom all will stand—God who might destroy—God wills all men to be saved. *God.* The God who is forgotten—Men think of their pleasure, their money, their families, but forget Him who made them, in whom they live and move and have their being. Still God is patient. God does not at once display His power—God is strong and patient, willeth all men to be saved.

This is the message. With this message we have been sent into this parish. For six months it has been delivered. Many have come to hear it. Those who live nearest the doors have not come. We determined to open it at nights—but the thought came into our minds, 'Perhaps they will not come. Perhaps the old peal of bells may ring in vain. What shall we do?' Every Friday we meet for prayer and to think over what is best for the parish. One Friday morning we thought, 'Shall we go out and invite them?' I did not like the idea, but again and again the words rang into my heart, 'Go out into the highways and into the streets and lanes of the city, and compel them to come in.' So we have come out.

Then I gave the substance of the Gospel, and the Saviour's love, and ended with, 'There is much more which I have to say. Come to-night and hear me in the church,' and then ended with 'To that church I invite all here present in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,' and then gave the blessing, and the procession reformed and went back to church.

I preached in church that night to a crowded congregation, and every night since has been the same. If only God in His goodness will give the people perseverance to continue, a real work may be done for that part of the parish this summer. On account of this I have put off my holiday till the latter part of August, September or October. T. W. is going with his Aunt to stay at Folkestone with Col. Des Vœux. He is in a great

state of excitement. All well. Our most affectionate love to you both and Ever believe me,

Yours affectly,
G. H. W.

A very deep impression, says Mr. Green, was made by that Whitsunday preaching; but this was not enough for one all on fire to gain a definite hold on individual souls. As long as ever the course of summer sermons lasted, a weekday meeting was held in the adjoining schoolroom, for the instruction and encouragement of all who might have been moved to seek peace with God. The result was most cheering. Some of our best communicants and workers traced the beginning of their new life to that evangelistic campaign at South Church.

To the Rev. T. Wilkinson

The Parsonage, Bp. Auckland: July 15, 1864.

I am glad that you are once more safe in England, but I am sorry that you are [only] able to give so poor an account of yourself. I hope that Brighton will put you all right again.

Car is at Oswald House, whither we went yesterday to dine . . . in honour of the seventh anniversary of our wedding and the arrival of Master Henry at the mature age of one year. We drank your health and heartily wished you every good wish. Harry had gone to Scarborough. Mother was better, had dined at a big feast which they gave the Dean and High Sheriff on the Wednesday. They did us the honour to invite us; but a quiet day suits old people best, and I think my eldest daughter rather too young for going out to dinner. The present fashion of bringing young ladies out into society so soon is a mistake! Car is as well as with No. 5 on its way can be expected.[1] Tom is at Folkestone. Did you go to see him? Constance is with Car at O[swald] H[ouse]. We have had a regular turn out for cleaning, painting, papering, and I have been alone, while they have all been at Redcar for three weeks. I ran down for a day or two when I was able. The children enjoyed the sands immensely, and we dug holes and made canals till I was fairly tired.

I had one very striking day at Redcar. A friend of mine[2]

[1] Their daughter Caroline (Carina) was born in December of that year.
[2] The Rev. T. Postlethwaite.

has established a Convalescent Home there. Men who are just recovering from illness are sent there, fed with the best of everything, instead of going back to their work half restored and so breaking down again. The whole thing is managed by the voluntary efforts of some Sisters. They are bound by no vows, free to leave when they like, and very happy they seem, and very great is the good which they confer on the neighbourhood. He has had invitations to send branches of the Home to several large towns in England.

Thursday was his anniversary Festival. Car and I went over. There were cheap trips from Leeds, Darlington, &c. Numbers of clergy, &c., from all parts. We had service at half-past 2, and a great tea afterwards for nearly a thousand people. I preached the sermon and spoke at the tea. . . .

It was a glorious day, and did me a world of good. My own work is going on well, thank God. Much anxiety, but very much to make me happy. The Parish Church is still full on Sunday evenings, and the effect of that outdoor preaching on Whitsunday has been great. The Bishop and some of the colliery owners have raised me 120*l.* a year to have a fourth curate and so begin some fresh work in the outlying parts of the parish. It will be very nice to talk these things over if, please God, we meet at Oxted. Let me hear soon how you are, and may God bless you, my very dear Uncle.

Kindest love to Aunt and Believe me

Ever yours,

G. H. W.

To the Rev. C. Green

7 Seamore Place, Mayfair, W., London:
Sept. 6, 1864.

I am intensely enjoying the rest and am, I trust, deriving new strength for the work which lies before us. I think that I have so arranged the holiday that, please God, it will be a real means of grace. I feel very much the importance of the time at which we have arrived in our work at B.A. Calmly reviewing the past, and making all deductions, I feel that a real work of the Holy Spirit has begun—the first drops of the coming shower falling around us—and that it is impossible to predict how much may be done in the next few years. May He keep us all pure and humble and very near to the cross, that by His own Spirit we may be guided aright and lose none of the blessings which He seems ready to bestow upon us. . . .

I had a long talk with Maclagan about the way in which churches are *bought*. I think that he agrees with us that it is better to leave the churches unbuilt than to build them with the money of unrighteousness. It is a difficult question.

To the same

Linlithgow Manse, Scotland: Oct. 1, 1864.

I feel increasingly thankful to God for His great mercy in allowing us all to work together so happily. It is very kind of you to wish me to take a longer holiday. I have well weighed the matter and feel that I had better abide by my original determination and return, please God, on Friday. It was for long a question with me about the Bristol Congress, but, on the whole, the balance is in favour of returning. I have promised to give three days to Coatham for a 'retreat' at the beginning of November, so I think that it would be wrong to protract my absence any longer. At the same time, all thanks to you both for so kindly suggesting it. . . .

I want you kindly to consider before my return as to the line which we should take for the winter at Sandy Pond. As to a weekly lecture there is, I think, no doubt. As to the Sunday, the objections which exist against beginning before we have a church are obvious. At the same time, every month is precious. The poor women who are awakened at the week day service require some 'means' on a Sunday. Is it right to sacrifice them, or to hand them over to Dissent, because we find it unpleasant to begin before all is complete? The fact that the church is not ready would account for any step which we might take as to occupying a cottage or using the schoolroom for a service on the Sunday. Col. Stobart leaves all in our own hands and will do whatever we wish.

He tells me that you are much liked by the people there, which is a cause for thankfulness.

I am very happy that I have been able to come here before the close of my holiday. It is good, I hope, both for body and spirit. There are few men with whom I have the sympathy which I feel for Macleod.

To the Rev. F. R. Chapman

Parsonage, Bp. Auckland: Nov. 15 [1864].

I am daily expecting Pusey's new book, and look forward to it with great pleasure. It is a great satisfaction to find that a

good man can live down his unpopularity, and by going straight forward oblige even those who differ from him to pay their homage to his goodness. I have a great respect for him, and I hear the tone is so fair and charitable, such an example of holding the truth in love, giving credit to whom credit is due, &c.

My own feeling about Sunday Schools is clear. *In the present state of things* no man can really work his parish without them. In them and by them he gains much of his religious influence. Parents will send their children somewhere to get them out of the way. If there is no Church Sunday School, they go to Dissent and there are taught to avoid the 'wicked Church.' Even if the Sunday School of Dissent be charitable, the children are weaned from the Church by clubs, sick funds, &c., and in time by being made teachers. Then again the blessing of having a staff of Teachers meeting one every fortnight to be prepared in their lessons is immense. They are the nucleus of an inner circle. By degrees you are able to awaken the higher life in them. They speak to you. They come to know you. They are bound to you. Through them your views are scattered far and wide. By their means many a sore is healed and bad feeling assuaged. . . .

We are one in principle about Cathedral Bodies—one Canon to manage Education and be the centre of theoretical and practical knowledge, another Missions, &c. In fact I liked the Dean's paper immensely, and am glad to find that we feel together on the point. They ought to reside longer. Perhaps it would be well to let them have a *little* parish work in the Cathedral town, otherwise there would be a danger of the Cathedral sermons becoming unpractical.

I like your idea about the Erratic Preacher. How much this is needed. Do you see your way to Church awakenings like our Lent Mission? I had a long talk with poor Laurell last summer, and he told me the Bishop of Oxford was beginning to try to get hold of individual souls by after-meetings or other means—in fact, to pick up the wounded.

Another point is suggested here by a remark of yours. We *are* too narrow, too fond of our parish, or rather, not fond enough of other parishes, not interested enough in the Church at large. I am trying to fight against this selfishness and to throw out my sympathies far and wide. *Apropos* of this my interest in Foreign Missions is greatly growing. My great friend Postlethwaite, a wonderful man in his power of dealing with souls

and in his combination of Evangelical and Churchmanship [*sic*], a very holy man, to whom numbers of the clergy owe the seeds of any spiritual life which they possess, is to have half of Hills' diocese and be Bishop of New Westminster. He and a missionary from Columbia, a Mr. Sheepshanks,[1] are going about begging for the Mission. He is no speaker, but Sheepshanks can talk well by the hour and has immensely interested my people. Should you like to have them? They are going to Cambridge, and I might arrange. I should like you to know Postlethwaite; and Sheepshanks, who is a stranger to me, would give you a great help in awakening missionary interests. If you would like to have them, give me a line.

As to what you say about the Parochial System, I feel that if the Church is to continue the National Church, something must be done, whether in the way of Lay Preaching or in what line I hardly know; but a clergyman is too expensive for every little hamlet, and yet Dissent can provide what the people consider just as good for every hamlet. In my parish, for example, six hamlets with two services by regular clergymen in each hamlet would cost far too much. Dissent does provide them. Problem: how to maintain the present efficiency of the Church and yet to meet these cases. My idea is, by having laymen appointed to work under the clergyman in this way. Let there be in each diocese a certain number of lawyers, surgeons, &c. (I mean men of that position), men of prayer, with a gift of preaching, who would go with permission of the Bishop and help any clergyman who lived within a certain distance of their own home—help him just on Sunday. . . .

Have you a photograph of my godchild? Will you please not get her her Church Books, and I will get them when I go to London (D.V.). I believe that under God nothing helped —— forward so much as looking forward to go to church with the books which you gave him. . . .

God bless you, my dear Frank, with every blessing.

To the Rev. T. Wilkinson

Bishop Auckland: Nov. 21, 1864.

We found London dull and dirty, and foggy and dispiriting, and were bored to death to find that some people were coming to dinner. However it turned out very pleasant, and as we were

[1] Now Bishop of Norwich.

going upstairs to the drawing-room after dinner a card was put into my hand, and my friend Graham, whose hut I occupied on the Mount of Olives, was announced. We got a room to ourselves and sat till half-past 11, talking about the valley of Jehoshaphat and the river Jordan and the Hill of Zion, and living over again many a happy hour the memory of which can never be effaced. I had written a line on the chance of his being in London. He had called while I was at Oxted, and finding that I was to return that evening had delayed his departure to Naples for a day or so, that we might have a talk.

After a few days I went to Scotland, and had a pleasant time with Donald Macleod, heard Norman make a capital speech on Missions, full of power. He said, 'There are some people who are very careful that no one should know what they give. A very good principle, but used sometimes to cloak a niggardly spirit. They say that they wish the left hand not to know what the right hand does. I believe that if the *fact were communicated, the left hand would not be much better for the information.*' It does not read well, but, with his Scotch accent and quaint manner, it had a most telling effect. . . . Then he went on to speak about the widow's mite. He said, 'I am wearied with hearing men talk about their mite. Let it be clearly understood. She gave *all* that she had, and when those who are always quoting her example have done the same we shall have no reason to complain.'

It was a very happy visit to Donald. He is such a cheering, true-hearted fellow, no cant or humbug, but full of life and energy, working hard in his parish and full of fresh thought. It is a good thing too for oneself to see how one's own Church is regarded by a man in another Church. He is very fond of our Church, and admires her Liturgy, and always goes to it when he is in England, but he is not unwilling to have a little quiet rap at what he calls our formalism. . . .

I must tell you about my own parish in my next. The Bishop is at Brighton with his boy, who is ill. We are in full force, five clergy, and all, thank God, pretty flourishing. There are ups and downs, things to disappoint and many many reasons for thankfulness. I hope and believe that our Lord is quietly but really bringing one by one not to remain content with the mere form of godliness, but to give up themselves with all their heart and soul to Him who shed His Blood to redeem them. For the last fortnight I have had one poor fellow day by day with me, and it is intensely interesting to see how the light is

gradually breaking in upon his heart, how God is gradually revealing to him his own sin and the work of the Saviour, no longer as mere names but as realities.

God bless you both, my dear Uncle and Aunt, and reward you, as He only can reward you, for all your kindness to us.

Extracts from the Diary

1863. *May* 9. A time of great anxiety as to who my successor [at Seaham Harbour] is to be. Feverish and worried, instead of resting upon Him who is the same yesterday and to-day and for ever. I pray for Green to be appointed, and hope that he may; but God is wiser than man, and in my better moments I say *ναὶ ἀμήν*.[1] I have learned lately how little sympathy I have, how selfish and cold and dead in my power of entering into the troubles of others. Much darkness and inability to pray, partly as a punishment for my selfishness and unkindness . . . partly—I know not why.

Aug. 15. How rapid are the changes. I turn over a page. The body became weak on Thursday. On Thursday, Friday, and Saturday the body was very out of sorts; a low depression rested upon me. I tried to cast it off, feeling how wrong it was, and succeeded for part of Friday and Saturday, but it came back. I felt as if I had no heart for anything. Only once or twice did I feel that my Lord was with me. For the most part when I wished for comfort, it only came from self. . . . And yet I know it is my own infirmity, but I will consider the years of the right hand of the most Highest.

Aug. 17. What we really need is a more personal love for our Lord, a more hearty devotion to Him. Duty is all very well and good for a beginning, but only for a beginning. We need a more simple, trusting belief in His care for us.

Aug. 27. The whole time I find it hard to rest in God. I am so inclined to begin things by way of thoroughly occupying my time, instead of rather feeding my soul and resting in Him.

Sept. 21. A day of great mercy. I deserved nothing, for I was very thoughtless with the tongue in talking to——. But I looked up to my God, and through the service of the Church came life and strength. In His power I went to speak to my sick, and found that the Word went home with power to all. I seemed in the Spirit, full of light and life and thankfulness.

[1] 'Even so, Amen.'

Never for weeks have I been so near God. And on Tuesday, when all this passed away, still there was a feeling that He was with me, that He could bless the word spoken in coldness, and that trusting to Him I need not fear.

Oct. 7. What a privilege it is that two or three may meet together in His name—that after three years we can join to praise Him for all His mercies and base our petitions for the future upon His goodness in the past. This day three years ago Green came, and preached on 'God so loved the world.' Then came the blessings of Advent and Confirmation. Praise the Lord, oh my soul.

Nov. 29. Beginning capital, but humbled much at the end. Driven home to my knees, and after long waiting taught some of its meaning. Partly correction for overdoing it all the week, . . . partly to crush my own vanity and humble me and empty me of self, partly to try my trust and make me depend more upon my Lord.

Dec. 26. Ill in body, impatient, worn in mind. No comfort in anything. C. C. W. ill; children not well; house dirty; everything wrong; myself sick, overdone, no rest; everything badly done. Christmas morning, no light. Let me look it in the face.

1. Overdone.—Take rest.
2. Late up.—Try to rise sooner.
3. Impatient.—Pray for patience.
4. Ill.—Bear it.
5. Dark.—Open heart to light.
6. Unkindness.—Walk in love.

The Christmas Feast was a real blessing to my soul. Cold and dead I went up to the House of the Lord. I took my burden with me, and left it there. I came away bright, happy, reconciled to God through Jesus Christ.

1864. *Feb.* 7. I have also learned that I must never read or pray or say grace carelessly, if I wish for a blessing. God will not allow me to pray when *I* like, and when I am not anxious, to make my supplications mere formal offerings.

July 3. Evening, able to speak freely, though, as I am told, roughly. May He who so far answered my prayers give me the further blessing of souls being awakened through the words so spoken.

Nov. 6. A strange season. I went to Coatham cold, dead, and tired. By degrees light came into my heart, and I was happier than I have been for long. Perhaps I was never so

happy. I came back, and for some days the blessing lasted. Trial came in a heavy measure. I was ill. I felt worn and worried. One anxiety after another pressed me down. I had one long struggle not to be impatient, and was impatient. I was told my prayers were mouthed . . . and felt that they were unreal. X. Y. Z. told me sermons were poor, and I felt they were poor and I could not mend them. He does not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.

1865. *Feb.* 11. In darkness I had to pray with B., and I asked God to use me as an instrument, and not to allow me to do harm through my own coldness. B. came back at night to tell me of the marvellous answer to prayer, how all his district was made open to him. This week has been one of great darkness to me—cold, lifeless, unreal. I cannot trace it up. I only ask God not to take it away till it has done the work for which He has sent it—to let it have its perfect work. Only in it may He show me Himself.

Feb. 25. Sunday night, after a day of much fatigue both in body and spirit, I had a terrible night. The great thought was God, God having a grasp upon the soul, upon me, a grasp from which there was no escape, for ever and ever. It was terrible. I could just cast myself on the Saviour; but I awoke again and again with this great darkness. 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.' And all this came after God had given in the morning a realisation of the 'hiding place from the wind.'

Mention has already been made, in one of Mrs. Wilkinson's early letters from Bishop Auckland, of Colonel W. Trotter and his family. The acquaintance then formed developed into a close intimacy and whole-hearted co-operation. Col. Trotter became the Vicar's Churchwarden and his 'right hand' in everything done in the parish. Col. Trotter's two daughters were indefatigable helpers in the work. When he died, during Wilkinson's incumbency, Wilkinson told Miss Caroline Trotter that he would be as a father to her 'until I give you back to him, please God, in Paradise.' After the mother's death in 1872, Mr. and Mrs. Wilkinson invited Miss C. Trotter to go and work at St. Peter's, Eaton Square, and there for the next four years she lived in the closest intercourse with them, more like an

eldest daughter than anything else. Miss Trotter was afterwards married to the Rev. Arthur Williamson, one of Wilkinson's best-beloved assistant curates, and afterwards Vicar of St. James's, Norlands. Mrs. Williamson gives a pleasant glimpse of Wilkinson's home life at Auckland :

During the years at Auckland Mr. Wilkinson used almost daily to make time to go for a walk with his wife. She told me how much she valued these bits of refreshment, and that he always remembered anniversaries—and that the one when he asked her to marry him and she accepted was very special, and I think she said he always put the engagement ring again on her finger that day.

My sister and I used often to spend very happy evenings at the Parsonage together, or sometimes I went alone. Mr. Wilkinson used when possible to read Poetry aloud to us and Mrs. Wilkinson, often from ' In Memoriam ' or other bits of Tennyson's. I shall never forget how he inspired Kingsley's ' Crucifixion of Saint Maura ' with life-like reality and tragedy—nor yet my favourite ' Saint Agnes' Eve.' Even now I can hear the rapture of his voice in

> The Sabbaths of Eternity,
> One Sabbath deep and wide—
> A light upon the shining sea,
> The Bridegroom with His *Bride* !

Then they would ask me to play and sing a hymn before prayers—often ' Abide with me,' or ' Sun of my soul,' and the servants came up and joined, and one went home encircled with the warmth of *her* radiance and affection, and with *his* quiet blessing still lingering in ear and heart.

Sometimes we went in to supper at the Parsonage after the Sunday evening service at St. Ann's, where the Vicar often preached with such intense fervour and force that it seemed to thrill every nerve in one's body. It was almost a shock to come down to earth and ordinary things from the mountain-top, so to speak, where the Unseen appeared *most* real; it was a sort of relief to find that he could eat, and talk, and smile or laugh like others—yet one half yearned to linger longer in that uplifting atmosphere, before facing the trials and temptations of every-day life again.

On summer evenings he would preach fairly often at St. Andrew's, the old Parish Church, more than a mile from the town. Never before or since has the grand old church been so filled by a vast congregation. The setting sun would often shine through parts of a stained-glass window in the transept, and light up his face while, with uplifted hand, he spoke such burning or pleading words—urging all to *repent*, and come to the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation and life while yet there was time. And the rapt faces and close attention of the men and women—many of the neighbouring pitmen, also from the districts round, and the hearty way in which they joined in the hymns and service, made a scene to live long in heart and memory.

I think Mr. Wilkinson always tried from earliest days to turn every little incident into a means for helping souls. Once at a dinner party when he was present in 1863, and had only recently come to Bishop Auckland, I remember singing that lovely air :

Lascia ch'io pianga
La dura sorte,
E che sospiri
La libertà !

He came and stood near, listening intently, and said something kind at the end—but when I met him shortly afterwards, he alluded to the song, spoke of the yearnings of the human heart, and of the ' liberty in which Christ has made us free,' and tried gently to ascertain if that was a realised experience.

The Sunday School Teachers' Meetings were a great and regular feature of the work at Auckland. No one could forget those for the Women Teachers when the study at the Parsonage was packed, and an intense spirit of earnestness prevailed. Printed papers of questions were given for each Sunday's instruction, all were expected to take notes, and each lesson was most thoroughly entered into and explained. At the close there was always some special teaching ' For Ourselves ' of deep personal training, and the meetings began with some collects, and ended with fervent extempore prayer. In one of his last letters to me the Primus wrote ' I often think of those old days at Auckland—the Sunday School Teachers' Meetings, &c.'

CHAPTER II

MISSION WEEK

In the Lent of 1865 Wilkinson made a new endeavour to lay hold upon the souls of his people. It took a form which has since become familiar to us, but which at the time bore the character of an experiment and a venture. It sprang out of that visit to Mr. Postlethwaite at Coatham of which Wilkinson wrote to his uncle in the previous July. Conversations then held led to a little meeting of like minded priests in the beginning of November. Mr. Postlethwaite, the Rev. George Body (then curate of St. James's, Wednesbury, of which Mr. Twigg was vicar), the Rev. J. H. Moore (then at Hartlepool), the late Adam Clarke Smith, Vicar of St. John's, Middlesbrough, and George Wilkinson, met at Mr. Postlethwaite's vicarage on All Saints' Day, and spent two days in devotion and in conference on the best means of quickening the religious life of a parish.[1] They agreed together on the following scheme :

Suggestions for a Mission Week

1. Some four or six like-minded clergymen should meet for a week or ten days, and concentrate their efforts on one parish.

2. Prayer should be made by all previously for God's blessing on the special work.

3. The earnest people of the various parishes concerned should likewise be asked to pray ; and this would produce not only direct but also indirect benefit in creating sympathy, and making all feel themselves to be members of one body.

4. The Methodist idea of a ' revival ' should be in every way avoided ; the word should be avoided, and another adopted—e.g. A Mission Week.

[1] I owe this information to the Rev. C. Bodington, Canon of Lichfield.

5. There should be services in the church each night, and the Holy Communion every morning, and special meetings of the clergy for united prayer daily.

6. All efforts to excite, and all unreality to be specially guarded against.

7. Subjects :—

Sin : its effects and consequences.
Salvation, through a loving Saviour.
Decision, set forth in simplest form.

All ought to be persuaded that it is ' not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit alone.'

8. Be willing to be content if no demonstrations of the Spirit be granted.

Read passages from the Acts of the Apostles, speaking of the blessing and power of the Holy Spirit in Apostolic labours.

9. Invite any persons to come to the clergyman's house at any hour of the day for direction.

10. Invite the serious to a second address in the school-house, not a prayer meeting, but for Scripture teaching and prayers by the clergy—the converted to be then dealt with alone.

11. Seek to realise that the Holy Spirit only can convince of sin and righteousness.

12. Prepare the communicants of the place beforehand to bring anxious souls to the clergy.

13. Avoid the idea that these efforts are to supersede or in any way interfere with the regular and systematic teaching of the parish priest. The true idea is to seek to rivet past teaching by an 'agony of prayer,' to compel sinners to come in, to ask for a special and extraordinary out-pouring of the Holy Spirit.

14. Meditate on the character of Christ : on His love for souls : on His power—' All power is given unto Me.'

15. Watch against the most subtle temptation to trust in human effort. All the work must be Divine work, and we but instruments, working not by our own power or holiness, but as ' endued with power from on High.'

How far these resolutions were the work of Mr. Wilkinson cannot now be ascertained, but he was the first to carry them into effect. The Mission at Bishop Auckland was, to all appearance, the earliest effort of the kind in the Church of England,

and marks an epoch in the spiritual history of this country. Evangelistic preaching had been carried on with success by the elder Mr. Aitken in Cornwall, and by Mr. Twigg in the Black Country, but their work differed in many respects from that which Wilkinson and his friends began with so much deliberation in 1865.

For some weeks before Lent began, Wilkinson was hard at work preparing his parish as thoroughly as possible for the Mission. A paper was distributed amongst the communicants which contained the following passages :

While we thank God for many blessings, we cannot but feel how few out of the 12,000 souls entrusted to our care are giving such evidences of a real change of heart as would afford us any Scriptural ground for comfort, if God were to summon them to appear before His judgment seat. One passage of God's word has especially weighed upon our minds : Ezekiel xxxiii. 8, 9. We have determined, therefore, . . . this Lent, to make a solemn appeal to all who are ignoring the Blessings of their Baptism, and living for the world instead of devoting their lives to the Saviour who died to redeem them.

Our plan is briefly this : A few Clergymen have agreed to join us in a Mission week, beginning on Sunday, March 5, at 8 o'clock, and ending on Monday, March 13. Every morning the Holy Communion will be administered, that our own souls and the souls of our Communicants may be strengthened by that Heavenly Feast. After the Holy Communion, it is our intention to devote our mornings to the study of God's word and prayer for the Holy Spirit. Every evening there will be Special Services in St. Ann's Church, and in Black Boy Schoolroom.

At the close of the Services, Meetings will be held in the Barrington and Black Boy Schoolrooms, at which further instructions will be given to all whose hearts have been led by the Holy Spirit to inquire ' What shall I do to be saved ? '

We hope, with God's blessing, by means of this Mission Week

1. To impress more deeply upon our own hearts, and upon the hearts of all our people, that the soul is more valuable than anything which this world can give.

2. In dependence upon the Holy Spirit to lead many souls to the Saviour before the day of grace is ended, and the door of mercy closed for ever.

We depend upon our Communicants

1. To set apart a certain time in every day for special prayer.

2. To bring all over whom they have any influence to the Mission Services.

3. To lose no opportunity of pressing upon their friends and neighbours the solemn appeal of our Divine Master, 'What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?'

It is hoped that the following Prayer may be useful to those who either here or in other parishes may be led to sympathise with our work:

'O God, who willest not the death of a sinner but rather that he should repent and be saved, give Thy blessing, I beseech Thee, to this effort, for the conversion of souls.

'O Heavenly Father, who in Thy great love hast sent Thine own Son to die upon the Cross for the sins of the whole world, enable me, I pray Thee, to care more for those souls for which His precious blood was shed. Fill my heart with such love to Thy Name, with so great a desire for Thy Glory, that I may long to hear of souls being saved, of many being brought out of darkness into light.

'O Holy Saviour, who savest all them that come unto Thee, have mercy upon those who are called by Thy Name, but who are now wandering far from Thee in the ways of error and destruction.

'Grant them the gift of true Repentance and hearty faith. Help them to seek Thee, till they find Thee. Help them, when they have found Thee, never to go away from Thee, but ever to rejoice with that joy which no man can take away, and to love Thee with that love which is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, that so persevering unto the end, they may attain Eternal life.

'O Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son, pour Thy Grace into the hearts of all who are engaged in this work, for which my prayers are desired. Help them in every difficulty, defend them from all evil, lead them unto all good. Guide them in every arrangement, that everything may be begun, continued, and ended to Thy Glory.

'Stir up the hearts of all who believe in our parish, that we may wrestle earnestly with Thee, pleading in behalf of our Brethren. Burn out of our hearts by Thy Heavenly fire all lukewarmness and indolence, all cowardice and self-seeking.

Make us ready to spend and to be spent in the service of our Lord, going out boldly and compelling men to come in, and to listen to the Gospel of their Redeemer. Fill Thy ministers who are here assembled, with Thy manifold gifts, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and Heavenly power, the spirit of knowledge and true Godliness. Let the word spoken by their lips not be spoken in vain. Bring many by Thy might to the foot of the Cross. Awaken the careless, cause those who are wavering to decide for the Lord. Bind up the broken-hearted and give true peace to every troubled conscience. Yea, O Holy Spirit, draw us all nearer to our Saviour, raise us all above the world, unite us all more closely together, that as we have one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, so we may with one heart and one mouth glorify our God and Father, through Jesus Christ Our Lord.'

The plan of the Mission so far differed from that which is now usually followed, that there was no one Missioner in chief brought in from elsewhere, to whom the conduct of the work was entrusted. Mr. Bodington, at that time Curate of St. John's, Middlesbrough, Mr. Moore, Mr. J. G. Rowe, Vicar of West Hartlepool, Mr. W. A. Scott, Vicar of Seaham, all took part in it for a few days each. Mr. Sheepshanks, now Bishop of Norwich, and Mr. Postlethwaite had both been expected, but were unable at the last moment to come. The curates of the parish, Mr. Green, Mr. Myers, Mr. Brown, and Mr. Wrightson, all preached in their turns. But the chief Missioner, as well as the manager of the whole work, was the Vicar himself. His notes for an address of guidance to the Mission workers are preserved; they are characteristic of the man.

Of course bring people. District, &c.
Individual souls.
1. Divide yourselves in Church and Meeting.
2. Deny yourselves.
3. Watch and Pray.
Watch for souls touched.
Pray for Holy Spirit, especially if sermon seems feeble.
4. Pray at Meeting. When I tell you, go and kneel by a soul. Help it to speak to God. Repeat point of sermon, God

will soon bind up if broken. Do not be in a hurry to press believing. Tell the Lord's work. 'Humble yourself.' 'You have not loved God.' Now say, 'Oh God have mercy, Oh my Saviour.' Surrender.

Neither seek for noise nor be afraid of noise.

To be earnest.—See the White throne and two roads.

To be calm.—Look on God. No fussing, talking in Church, &c.

Be separated.—In Presence of God—Battle Field and Soldiers.

Be judicious.—Bodily health. No overstrain.

Second Week. Rest.

5. *Cast burden* of your own souls on God—making notes for future.

6. Expect Satan. Do not lose heart. Cast it on HIM.

Self to die.—No vying with others—outdo others—to be conspicuous, to put self forward or hold it back. Pray for me—ask, when practicable; but when not, e.g. in meeting, obey and leave my mistakes to Him, unless outrageous.

Do not come to me without a reason—but with reason never scruple.

Get addresses of those who do not go to meeting.

Confidence in God.

On the Friday after the Mission began it was evident that the place was taken hold of, and, as he said afterwards, Wilkinson had to think out what to do with them.

Next morning I got on my horse and had a good gallop. Then I met the workers, and set them to pray, while I shut myself up in the library and wrote my little book, 'Be ye reconciled to God,' and the four 'Mission Prayers.' I had the four prayers printed separately on cards, and got the printers to get them done that same day. On the Sunday night we had a wonderful service and after-meeting. At the end I gave them each a copy of 'Be ye reconciled' and the first Mission Prayer, and asked them to use it carefully till Tuesday. Then on Monday C. C. W. and I got into the train and went to see Postlethwaite. I remember saying to him, 'We have got hold of the people, but what are we to do now?' He advised us, and we went back, and held the service on Tuesday. We took the names of all who wanted help, and saw them gradually all through Lent, one by one. It was a wonderful time, and many were brought through it to know our Lord.

Miss Trotter noted at the time in her diary :—

On Sunday, March 12, Mr. Wilkinson preached from Prov. i. 28, 'Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me.' A terribly thrilling sermon. It was evidently, as he said, a great effort to him to preach it, and the struggle to keep down all excitement made his very earnestness more impressive. His pictures of the state of a lost soul I shall never forget.

There was a crowded congregation at this and at all the Mission Services; especially in the evenings the congregations have been wonderful, as well as the attendances at the Meetings for those 'who desired more teaching' afterwards. *Very* many have come forward to Mr. Wilkinson, quite broken down, and earnestly seeking more help and guidance.

The issue of this Lent Mission has been even beyond expectation.

When the Mission was over, the following retrospect was printed and circulated in the parish, and amongst those elsewhere who had prayed for the Mission :—

Lent Mission in Auckland

It has been thought right that those who have prayed for this work should know how far God has answered their prayer. There is no need for a long account, and it is written as simply as possible, in order that it may be understood by the most uneducated of those who have been pleading with their Father in Heaven, in behalf of this effort for the Salvation of Souls. The plan of the Mission, as sketched in a former paper, was carried out during the week. The Clergy engaged in the work met for Holy Communion in St. Ann's Church every morning at 8 o'clock. Several of the parishioners were also present, and the number of Communicants was never less than 20, and on two occasions exceeded 50. After Holy Communion, the Clergy assembled for united prayer and study of Holy Scripture, and then retired to their own rooms for private prayer and meditation. The effect of this arrangement was very marked in the tone of all who were engaged in the work. The influence of the early Communion seemed to be shed over the entire day, and all are anxious to record their thankfulness for the increase of faith and brotherly love which, in answer to the

prayers of their people, they received during those happy days. The same fruits of the Holy Spirit were manifested in many of the Communicants. Some gave up themselves during the week to bringing strangers to the Services, and finding seats for them in Church. Others made it a duty to pray silently at intervals during the sermons, that the Holy Ghost might guide His Ministers in speaking according to His will. One Communicant, whose name is still unknown, engaged a person to act as Bible woman during the week, and help forward the work of the Mission in any way that might be considered desirable. The District Visitors, *as a whole*, exerted themselves earnestly to make known in their districts the object of the Services, and to induce the people entrusted to their care to avail themselves of the opportunity which was afforded of listening to the message of their Heavenly Father. To sum up what has been said, we feel that we have to thank God—

1st.—For the number of persons by whom the Services were attended, both on Sunday and during the week.

2nd.—For the way in which all human excitement was restrained. It was an oft-repeated remark, how calm and solemn was the tone of the people both in the Church and in the Schoolroom.

3rd.—For the manner in which all engaged in the work were drawn to each other, and the increase of trust in God and sympathy with each other, which was poured into their hearts.

We come now to the main object of the Mission. The object of all the prayer and all the preaching, and all the efforts, was to bring souls to the Saviour. How far has this been accomplished? It will be seen by reference to a former paper, that the work was carried on at two centres—St. Ann's Church, and Black Boy Schoolroom. At each centre, sermons were preached, and after-meetings held. The object of these meetings was thus announced: 'At the close of this service, an address will be given,' or 'A meeting will be held in the —— schoolroom, to which any persons who *really* desire more teaching are invited.' In the town these meetings were largely attended. In the Colliery, only few had courage to attend. This difference may perhaps be accounted for by the fact, that at the Colliery the after-meeting was held in the same room as that in which the service had been held. Hence any person who remained behind was marked by the entire congregation—a test of earnestness,

which was not imposed in the town, where all alike passed out of the Church, and only those who were themselves present in the Schoolroom, could know with certainty the names of those who were thus anxious for further teaching. At these after-meetings a hymn was sung, prayer was offered, and very plain teaching given as to sin, salvation, repentance, faith, the work of the Saviour, decision, &c. Notice was given that any persons who wished for more help might receive it from any of the Clergy, either at their own homes or at the Parsonage. So the week passed until Sunday evening, March 12, had arrived. Notice was given in the Church and in the Black Boy School-room to the effect, that all who had attended any after-meetings during the week were invited to attend the concluding meetings, which were then about to be held. At these concluding meetings the following course was adopted: First, prayer was offered, then the Communicants present were thanked for the help and sympathy which they had given during the week, and, except in special circumstances, desired to retire. The teaching of the week was then repeated, and it was clearly set forth, that there was no need of any human being intervening between a soul and its Saviour. All therefore who felt that they had learned the way of salvation, and were able for themselves to seek the Saviour, were next desired to retire. It was clearly explained, that the names of those who remained would be taken, and that they would be regarded as asking help and guidance from their Ministers, as having been taught by God to see their own sin, and as earnestly anxious to be reconciled to Him against whom they had offended. After this explanation several retired, and at last 80 persons humbly and thankfully gave in their names.

It would be wrong to go into further detail. Enough has been said to show how God has answered prayer—enough to show the importance of continuing, with increasing earnestness, the prayers which in different parts of England have, during the last week, been offered in behalf of this parish. A blessing has been given, but it is unnecessary to observe that now, more than ever, the power of the Holy Ghost is required. Who but He can deepen the conviction of sin in their souls? Who but He can so reveal the Saviour that they may be able to thank God, through Jesus Christ their Lord? Who but that Almighty Spirit can bring to decision the numbers who have been touched by the word spoken, and to whom no

reference has been made in this paper. Nearly 300 names have been put down for the Confirmation Classes, which begin next week. May we not hope that those who have strengthened our hands already, will go on praying at this most anxious time, for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit? Let not the Holy Spirit be grieved by any unreality. Let there be no talking about the numbers of those who attended the services or remained behind. Let there be in fact as little talking as possible, but calm, earnest, united persevering prayer—Prayer for the souls who have taken a decided step, that they may not draw back, but persevere until they have laid hold of Eternal life—Prayer that none of the good seed which has been sown may be wasted—Prayer that the bodies and spirits of God's Ministers may be strengthened and Satan kept back from hindering the work—Prayer for the Church throughout the world, that the Kingdom of Christ may be everywhere enlarged, and the day hastened when He will return in His glory, with all His Holy Angels. He is faithful who has promised. He who shed His blood to save us has said: 'Ask, and ye shall receive;' 'Seek, and ye shall find.'

Since the account was printed—Mrs. Wilkinson wrote to her aunt, Lady Grey—we have even heard of more fruit of the Mission. God has indeed blessed it. Our hearts are so full of it we can scarcely write about it. . . .

I think Mission Week was one of the happiest weeks in our life. Every morning Holy Communion at 8, and then the church was left open for twenty minutes for private prayer, so that those who wished to continue in prayer remained. Oh, it was so solemn and still! We had a Mr. Bodington, Mr. Moore, Mr. Rowe, and Mr. Scott with us (Mr. Postlethwaite was to have come, but to our great disappointment was twice prevented just as he was starting). The curates also all came in to breakfast—such enjoyable breakfasts they were. I poured out the tea and listened. Only one subject was allowed to be talked of all through the week—Religion and the Work. Part of the mornings and afternoons I went about the town doing little things for G. H. We all dined together at 1.30 (not the curates). At 7.45, Church—crowded every evening, and such earnest faces. The strangers preached. After the service (about 9 o'clock it was over) the schoolroom meetings, when G. H. addressed them, and awfully solemn it was.

To Mr. Chapman, Wilkinson wrote :

Parsonage, Bishop Auckland : April 21 [1865].

Your letter of March 7 arrived most seasonably, and was a great comfort to us. I took your advice about the body, and by frequent rides, and good food, and God's blessing, kept up my strength. I find it a great comfort now to be able to pray with faith for bodily strength. I felt a few months ago as if I was going to break up, and since then I have been led to plead day by day for health, and find that the prayer is not left unanswered.

I sent you a paper with the general results of Mission Week. The indirect blessings could not be written. The daily Communion had a solemnising influence which I could not have believed. All light conversation, all criticism of sermons, was excluded. It was understood that by common prayer God's blessing was to be obtained, and that each man was to go up to the pulpit believing that in answer to the prayers of the *whole* body he would be helped to speak according to God's will. Many of our own inner circle received much blessing. It has brought to my darling wife that for which I have been praying and for which she has been seeking for years—the fuller knowledge of the Saviour, the thorough decided surrender of body, soul, and spirit to Him. One of my best people said they never realised the power of prayer till that week. Some who always appeared to be all that one could wish found in that week so much more of the fulness of the Saviour that it has been to them the beginning of a much higher life, a sort of second baptism. We have felt the need of an early celebration of Holy Communion every Sunday, and I trust that God will help us all not to lose the spiritual strength which He has given. It has made a great change in my younger curate, a deacon, a very hopeful man, but one who wanted to be deepened.

The persons to whom I referred in the paper which I sent were of different characters. We have seen them all, some several times. Some were in great anxiety. I never saw such a deep sense of the burden of sin, except in those who had lived immoral lives, whereas these were with scarcely an exception amongst our most respectable people. Nearly all who were *deeply* in earnest found peace, after much teaching as to the Saviour's work and much prayer. At one time nearly every room in the Parsonage had some one in who had no place to pray at home, but who was seeking with many tears. The joy

which they seemed to feel (in some cases), when they realised the completeness of the Saviour's work and the pardon of their own sin, made one almost envy them.

I have written none of this to anyone. I do not like to write about it, but I know you will pray with me that they may not be like the seed which fell on the stony ground.

My wife keeps the young girls together in a Communicants' Class. I have the men, and some of the women are in another class of my wife's. A good many are quiet, steady-going cases, more of the type which I have been accustomed to since I began seeing people privately. They are going on quietly learning a little more each week, and will, I hope, in time be fairly started. Some remained back under a misapprehension as to the meaning of the invitation. There is no doubt that there has been a great blessing upon the parish. I wonder that I do not feel more happy. I ought to be, but the anxiety is very great, and that keeps me down. Perhaps God knows my nature and sees that I cannot bear being much 'lifted up,' as the Methodists say.

This is what Wilkinson noted down for his own severe eye :

Temptations and sins. Fear of the world, and still more a wish for all to speak well of the movement—a desire that no one should think anything a failure. This comes in with individuals and in general teaching. All grieves the Holy Spirit. . . . *Many mercies.* No disturbances at Sunday evening service. Crowded, but quiet. More than once in sermon I asked for Bodington, and he was helped to say the right thing. C. C. W. so happy in the Lord at Holy Communion. Great blessing on Monday morning ; Miss Wilson came in and said that one of the communicants, whose time was not her own, wished to help forward the Mission Work, and had engaged Miss Wilson for the week to be at my disposal. . . . In the morning much helped. A bright afternoon and delightful ride. After that, what must I do but evil, evil, evil ; not struggling to pray ; so anxious about numbers, about Ch.'s judgment, men rather than women, not for God's glory but for mine. Then I heard of P. having met all his fellow workmen and taken them with him to church. . . . When the sermon [at Black Boy] was over, I prayed for people to stay behind. It was not granted in my way, but I feel that it was granted. I feel that God will bless, even though I am not told, what was said. . . . Morning came. Such love and pardon from my Lord ; such strength given in Holy Communion, in prayer. . . The day went forward ; a quiet, happy walk with Cara. . . . Then

going out at night with Bodington and talking far too much. . . . Sunday, came the fullest, deepest trust and happiness that I have ever known. Dear C. C. W. was so great a help.

To the Rev. T. Wilkinson

[? April] 1865.

Never, I think, have I had so busy a winter. It has been a case of day by day work, with every day fully occupied for some months. I never realised before the need of asking for daily strength as well as for daily bread. I have felt often during the winter as if I should knock up, but thank God, I have been wonderfully well and in capital spirits.

We have got a very good governess for the children, which gives Car much more freedom from care, and makes her able to help me by taking classes of different kinds without neglecting home duties.

The more that I go about, the more I feel the wonderful effect of Mission Week. To ourselves it was the most quiet solemn time that I ever spent in my life. There were nine of us, some for one portion of the time and some for another. It was arranged from the beginning that a watch was to be set upon the conversation, that it was all to be in harmony with the object of the week, that all criticism of sermons was to be avoided, that each man was to feel that he was only the mouthpiece of the whole body and that any good which might follow his words [was] only given in answer to the prayers of the entire body. I had no conception that we should *so soon* reap the harvest. I was certain that blessing would come in time, but I hardly dared to hope that it would come so soon. Some of my most religious people say that it was the beginning to them of a new life—some thoroughly respectable people so broken down by a sense of sin that for days nothing would comfort them; careless young fellows and silly girls as well as grown up people *beginning*, at any rate, to lead a real Christian life. I cannot write all. I do not much like writing about it, but I am looking forward with very great pleasure to a good long talk with you, if, please God, you are at Oxted, when we go South. Our present plan is to leave here towards the end of June. Tell me when you write if you have any plans made which will take you from Oxted about the beginning of July.

Wilkinson wrote in his diary in April:

We have been in great anxiety about our Confirmation. A large number of candidates have presented themselves and are

attending pretty regularly. We cannot look into their hearts, but we feel that there is very little spiritual feeling. What is to be done? We have prayed. We have commended the subject to the attention of our praying people. We have had special prayers in Holy Week. Now we have decided to speak solemnly, to tell them our own feelings on the subject, and to urge upon them to delay till next year. Those who are really in earnest are to single themselves out, and all our care is to be bestowed upon them. The first of these addresses was given April 23. All came to St. Ann's. I spoke explaining the 'I do,' the 'in the presence of God,' pressing the giving up the heart, however weak. I prayed, and tried to put both the love and the strict requirements of God. My text was 'There is not a word in my tongue,' &c. In the evening I pointed out to the congregation the twofold danger of making the righteous sad or [encouraging] the wicked, and begged them to work with us. On Saturday papers of solemn questions printed.

On Sunday afternoon [April 30] preached again telling them our opinion, that they were unfit in a vast majority of instances, and advising them to put off till the next year, but speaking warmly of Christ's readiness to receive those, however weak, who were in earnest. Miss Trotter,[1] Mrs. Johnson, pressed this in their classes, found great seriousness in all. I prayed, and was in great hopes that many would be kept back. I asked God to upset my own plans if it were His will, and I must leave it with Him. Many of them in a very solemn frame of mind. Next day my plans were upset in a way which I had little anticipated. A letter came from the Bishop, objecting to the pledges, objecting to the asking any promises, regarding my manner of putting the papers as a pledge. He withdrew offer of a Confirmation, &c. This was a breaking down indeed. Little did I anticipate it. I saw him—an hour's interview. He tells me that I have no right to take these pledges, that they are illegal and also useless. Much trial. God very good. He supported us wonderfully, but it was a trial.

To the Rev. C. Green

Parsonage, Bp. Auckland: Aug. 1, 1865.

I was in hopes that we should have met on Thursday next, the day of our Redcar Trip. . . . I have invited the two Choirs,

[1] Now Mrs. Tyrwhitt-Drake, the elder sister of Mrs. Williamson.

the Sunday School Teachers, &c., to dine with me at the Central Hall. We shall muster about 60. I reflected upon the matter and decided that it was worth the expense, though it was more than was quite convenient. The people want uniting to each other and to the Church, and nothing has such a cementing effect upon an Englishman as dinner. I hope that we shall have a fine day. . . .

I am very sorry that Postlethwaite is going. For himself, I doubt not that God will bless him wherever he is. Unless there are reasons of which I am ignorant, I doubt the wisdom of his decision. To myself, it will be a great loss. Amongst the attractions of Auckland was the thought of its vicinity to Coatham. With the exception of Moore, Postlethwaite is almost the only man in these parts with whom I can speak freely and yet be sure that he will neither speak, nor lead me to speak, anything which our Lord would not approve. More and more I feel the need of this watchfulness and self-restraint, if we are to grow in grace and enter into the Higher life. Clerical talk, Clerical jokes, Clerical sarcasms upon our Brethren, ruin the soul and deaden its Heavenward aspirations, and send one home ashamed of the part which one has taken, and weakened instead of invigorated by what ought to have been a Communion of Saints. . . .

On Sunday I am to give notice in St. Andrew's of a Meeting for enquirers on the Tuesday. If, which God grant, this succeed, I shall be more than fully occupied. Our idea in the Meeting is to get hold of those who are beginning to think. There will be no questions at first—only teaching. . . .

We never forget you on a Friday and at other times. God bless you, my dear Green, in body and spirit and through all your holiday draw you nearer to Him in whom is Life.

Wilkinson and his wife took a holiday in the Lake District and elsewhere in July and August. He wrote to his uncle on his return :

Aug. 25, 1865.

One of my classes had a nice surprise to welcome us home. They had arranged a tea, joined together and subscribed the requisite money, and so they entertained Car and me the Monday after our return. About fifty sat down, men and women, and afterwards we had speeches and music till nine o'clock in the evening, when we all went home to rest.

Some of them spoke uncommonly well. One man said, 'Mr. Wilkinson came to me and gave me a bundle of tracts and told me that I was to take them round once a week. Well, I had a great many looks at my tracts, and my tracts looked at me, till at last I fixed that I would take them round on the Wednesday. Well, the tracts said, just wait a day and take us *to-morrow*. No, I said, you will go to-day. Well, said the tracts, if we must go to-day, let us go after dark. No, I answered, you must go in the broad daylight. Well, said the tracts, if we must go, do not let us catch cold, put us under the great coat. No, I said, I have made up my mind—I am very nervous about taking you, but you will have to go. I have said it and I will do it. You will go *to-day*, in the *daylight, outside*, so that every one may see that although my early days were not spent in the tract line of business, now that God has helped me to make a fresh start, I am going to do it openly and not in a half and half sort of way.'

Poor fellow, he was almost ruined by drinking. The house denuded of everything. The wife starving, the children in rags, and himself in the public house trying six times in succession to drink some more and not able because he had drunk so much before. God grant that he may have strength now to stand firm, but it is always a danger. It is so easy for them, poor fellows, to fall back, so hard to stand fast. In fact nothing but God's grace can help a drunkard to abstain from drinking.

To the Rev. C. Green

East Hill, Oxted, Surrey: 1865.

Time is rolling on, and please God, we shall soon be all together again and commencing the winter campaign. May His Spirit guide us to use aright the large amount, speaking relatively, of strength which He has placed at our disposal. . . .

I am very glad that you feel so comfortable at Auckland. To my own mind it affords an almost infinite field of usefulness. I incline much to the idea of a weekly Communion after the next Confirmation. I am delighted with what you tell me of Myers, and with what Myers tells me, and what I hear from other sources, of Brown's preaching. With both of them gaining such a hold upon the people we have reason indeed to be thankful.

Many thanks for the article which I return. I consider that our position as a Church is most critical. I thank God that

at present I am only called upon to work and to pray. It would wear me to death if I were brought much into contact with the wretched degrading anomalies by which our work as a Church is hindered. However, God's ways are not as our ways and He will order all aright, though the trials which are in store for us may be very fiery. I was much struck with the toleration article in the 'Times' to which you refer.

A letter which he wrote to the same friend in that same summer shows the very spirit of his whole life. Mr. Green, it seems, had urged him to take up with interests outside his work, which might be a relaxation and refreshment.

East Hill, Oxted, Surrey: July 10 [1865].

While I grant most freely the importance of rest, &c., and feel the danger to which you refer of allowing *one idea* to take exclusive possession of the mind, still there is another side which must not be overlooked. The men who have moved the world have always been men of one idea. They have not, I grant you, always been happy, but they have prevailed with God and with man. We may obtain relief by not throwing ourselves exclusively into one great work, but we obtain the relief at the sacrifice of power. One τέλος to which all the energies of the renewed nature are made to converge, this is the secret of success. When failure comes, and disappointment weighs down the spirit, then a man must lie at the foot of the cross, till God see fit to raise him up again. He must not shrink from bearing the sins, the sorrows, the failures of his people. He must not seek for relief, but stoop down and carry their burden, if he would be a true Priest and grow up into the likeness of Christ. Look at the men who fall back upon Art or Geology or anything else. They are more free from care, but they never taste the fulness of joy which he receives who has counted the cost and devoted his life to one object. In all this I am purposely putting one side forward as strongly as possible, not wishing for a moment to deny what may be said on the other side.

I have had a very pleasant rest, seen a good deal of old friends, come in for some London society, and had the healthy discipline of being with people who never heard either of me or my work—all which is good for a man. I had a heart-stirring day at Clewer; their anniversary. Processions, services, Bishop of Oxford, &c., &c., quite perfect.

CHAPTER III

TROUBLES AND SORROWS

About this period the attitude of his Bishop, who, it will be remembered, was also the chief parishioner at Auckland, began deeply to grieve and disappoint Wilkinson. Although Bishop Baring had been exceedingly kind and trustful towards him at the beginning of his incumbency, differences of opinion and feeling began soon to show themselves ; and the Bishop was not a man to suppress his views. As early as Wilkinson's first May at Auckland the Bishop took exception to the doctrine —apparently about Baptism—set forth by one of the curates. He wrote to Wilkinson upon the subject. ' Felt quite ill,' the vicar wrote in his diary after receiving the letter. He went to see the Bishop, and the Bishop pained him further by reminding him that a good part of the curate's stipend was to come from the episcopal purse. He told Wilkinson that his own preaching —as may perhaps have been the case—was not all that it should have been ; that it lacked the ' treacle ' which attracts the human fly. When the time of the Mission came, the Bishop not only withheld his sanction (though he did not actually prohibit it), but forbade the attendance of any members of his household. In speaking to the vicar about it both before and after, ' the Bishop was like ice.'

The fact is, says Mr. Green, that his Lordship never seemed to appreciate the delicacy of his position at the Castle as uniting in one person parishioner and Ordinary. Nothing could take place but he must either see or hear of it ; and if it did not please him, at once came an order of prohibition, generally worded in the curtest terms. Our dear chief often had reason to complain of such letters. By a strange chance I find a choice specimen in my possession. Once or twice the Vicar's health broke down,

and he had to go abroad. During his absence I should have to get some clerical help, and in this instance I had doubtless sent to Durham. What fault the Bishop had to find with Mr. Cranmer I have not the faintest idea. No reason whatever is assigned, nor are any words wasted over my own feelings in the matter. 'Hoc volo, sic iubeo ; sit pro ratione voluntas.'

Here is the letter he received.

Auckland Castle, Bishop Auckland : Jan. 30, 1866.

My dear Sir,—I must request that Mr. Cranmer may not be again employed to assist in the duties of this Parish.

Yrs very truly,
C. Dunelm.

A young deacon, Mr. Green pursues, who had just joined our staff wears his stole over one shoulder only, or a curate at the administration of the Holy Communion uses what his Lordship is pleased to call a 'maniple' but was simply a napkin or purificator with which he wiped the rim of the chalice. In each case the vigilant episcopal eye detected a sign of 'Ritualism,' and the Vicar received a missive as imperative as any Encyclical *Pascendi* from the Vatican.

It has been already mentioned that the Bishop refused in every way to countenance the Mission we held, maintaining that all it aimed to accomplish could be more legitimately secured on the old lines of faithful preaching and house to house visiting. At one of our Confirmations, when his own son happened to be a candidate, the Bishop took strong objection to a paper of questions issued by Wilkinson, on the ground that we had no right to exact any pledge from those who were to be confirmed as to future attendance at the Holy Communion.

Mr. Green doubts whether any reasonable person in the present day would think the Bishop justified in withdrawing his son from the care of the parochial clergy, as he actually did.

On the day of that Confirmation, May 21, Wilkinson wrote :

So sick and weak and headachy—able to enter into the prayers, but quite unable to enter into the service afterwards, though it was Holy Communion. Very weak and ill at dinner. . . . God heard and answered, and in His strength I was able to go well through the Confirmation. When I went into the vestry, I found that my sermon, my Bible, all was left. Cast

myself upon God, and was wonderfully helped. The will weak. The body weak, worn, and harassed, unequal to anything, tired to death. On Friday came back to God, to try and live once more to Him. I think He has compassion on the bodily weakness, but where I fail is in trust and true prayer. I do not truly ask, nor believe in the answer, when I do ask as to course to be taken, after all. There has been work all the morning, and a class every night, but I am wearied and worn ; so unable to pray, or grasp the presence of anyone, and for all this I will not excuse myself. Sin lies at the door.

In September there is a note to the effect that the Bishop told a visitor, who repeated it to Wilkinson, ' that G. H. W. was sanguine ; that he trusts to spirits, outside teaching ; ' that he, the Bishop, ' was not satisfied with the result of the Lent Mission—will not have another. So many women at Holy Communion at St. Ann's, so few men.' ' So hard I found it to bear,' the vicar writes, ' so tempted to speak of it ; yet blessed be my Lord, I know it is His love—to teach me my danger, at least to try me.'

In November :

Bishop says I have been in a dangerous position, popular with a little circle by which I was surrounded, thinking no one like me ; led away, not to sympathise with those who differed from me—to take dark views of their state ; must have people to work in my way, &c. ' Search me, O Lord, and try me.'

Wilkinson found it all the harder to bear the Bishop's treatment of him, because he had thrown himself whole-heartedly into furthering a scheme which the Bishop had recently started. Mr. Green observes that at Auckland Wilkinson endeavoured in a manner surpassing anything that he had done at Seaham, to make the Parish realise its own corporate unity, and its relation to the Diocese. Bishop Baring, having opened a Church Building Fund to meet the increasing spiritual needs of new districts in town and country, issued a vigorous appeal for its support, to which Mr. Wilkinson at once responded by asking his people for liberal contributions. So intent, indeed, was he on securing the greatest possible amount of co-operation, that he organised a house to house collection. Ours was the only parish in the diocese, I believe, where any such systematic effort was made.

It was called the 'Church Mission Basket,' and Sales of Work were held on behalf of it, and Wilkinson printed and disseminated earnest exhortations to contribute to it. His very zeal for the cause became a trial to him on dark days. 'Pride came up,' he writes in December, 'as to way in which I put my feelings as to Bishop aside, &c., &c.—anxious for Fund to succeed, in order to show reality of the work.'

But if Mr. W. wished his people thus practically to acknowledge their relation to the Diocese at large, Mr. Green says, he was, if possible, still more anxious that all under his charge, whether belonging to the town or the outlying colliery villages, should be brought to feel that they formed one body, and so had common interests and obligations. This object he sought to accomplish by making the patronal Festival on St. Andrew's Day an occasion for a grand corporate communion in the old Parish Church, and by a big social gathering in the town hall of Bishop Auckland, when after what is called in the North a 'tea fight,' speeches and addresses were delivered, sometimes on topics of general interest by old friends of the Vicar, like Dr. Donald Macleod of Glasgow, but always including some report of the work that was going on in different parts of the parish whether with signs of progress, stagnancy, or decline. This was our annual 'stock-taking,' and the well-understood *mot d'ordre* was 'no cooked accounts.' The festival so established met a real want. People felt it to be a most happy bond of union as well as an incitement to higher aims. Year by year ever since 1865 St. Andrew's Day has continued to be observed in the same spirit, and, thank God, with unabated interest.

His father came over to the first of these yearly gatherings. It was 'a day of great blessing,' Wilkinson notes in his diary; '102 communicants. St. Ann's full at night. Town Hall crammed.' He felt deeply thankful afterwards that he had preserved the letter which his father wrote to him that evening.

From his Father

St. Andrew's Day [1865], Oswald House, Durham.

I cannot allow a post to leave, my dear George (for however convenient it would be to use the word 'Howard,'[1] you are

[1] He was sometimes so called to distinguish him from his father.

my George and *ever* will be), without expressing how delighted I was to hear you this morning and to think that I had the credit of making and bringing up one so well fitted to do good amongst his people. I have clung to the day in which *we all* met at Limpsfield, and I should have been *glad* if that had continued whilst we both lived, but the way in which the whole service was performed—your own *most* beautiful address—added to the extraordinary number who stayed the Holy Communion, made it one of—nay *the* most interesting service I ever attended. Thank God that I should have been the instrument for doing so much good.

I suppose such opportunities of hearing *you* (I carefully avoided asking you if you were to preach) are seldom afforded on *week days*; as, altho' I am quite justified amongst *men* by Mr. Sneyd's positive opinion that, situated as we are at Elvet, that it is our *duty* not only to go anywhere where the Gospel is preached, but if even it entails the use of horses and carriages and men rather than sit and listen to a 'lie,' as I feel assured we have both implied and practised at St. Oswald's, I cannot, however, get over the use of horses and carriage, &c., on a Sunday, and as it would entail also a disturbance of all the arrangements I have had ever since I kept house. But in every case where there is full service on a week day I depend on you letting me know, and if possible I will with as many as can, avail ourselves of the privilege of going to South Church.

To Miss Cotton

Parsonage, Bp. Auckland: Nov. 9 [1865].

I know so well what you mean about the mechanical feeling. With four curates and about forty Visitors and four Sunday Schools and five Day Schools I have an amount of detail to look after which used to wear me very much. Now I try more and more to make it a matter of prayer and find an immense relief. To stop a few moments in the midst of accounts or other secular work and to realise that God lives and that we are serving the Lord Jesus is a wonderful refreshing to the soul. It is not always possible, but I am sure that it is the Gospel principle, 'Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do *all*,' &c. I think the work is progressing. The great thing which we are now trying to do is to deepen the work in the hearts of those who were given to us in the spring, to build them up in a living

Christianity and a real Churchmanship. Starting with the one foundation, we build upon it the membership in the body under the one Head, the blessings of Public Worship, the people's office in church, and so forth. We are getting quite a hearty response, and I trust that many are beginning to feel that the church is indeed the House of Prayer. How much has to be done I need not tell you. I feel sure that you will continue to pray for us as I do for Kensington.

All through this period Wilkinson was keeping up his self-scrutiny with the same vigilance as before. He had lately been reading the 'Spiritual Combat' for the first time. It made him still sterner with himself. Not only were the hours of rising, and the times spent in devotion, all noted, but a daily account was kept of how every quarter of an hour throughout the day was spent. Each week ends with a review, under the threefold heading of *Sins, Blessings, Trials.*

Oct. 7. How fond of doing good for the enjoyment of it, not for glory of God, or the good of that soul.

Oct. 21. Try this week more system for prayer in morning, finishing at 1. [Go] out at 2. 2 [hours] visiting, 1 reading. No waste after prayers at night.

Nov. 11. Then came illness and darkness. The Communicants' Meeting, so cheering in itself, did *me* little good; so with the meeting for Columbia. On the day Black Boy School was opened, came help. . . . Then on my way home I found how by writing hastily to the Bishop I did not write truly. It was true objectively, but not subjectively. It was hard to admit, but peace came with the admission. Then I had a hard struggle . . . at Bishop's meeting. . . . My own trouble and disappointment about St. Ann's,[1] so difficult to throw myself into the larger meeting, so *gritty*. Perhaps St. Ann's is stopped to raise money for the Diocese. The Bishop prays. The Church is all dear to Christ, not merely the one part. Then my own æsthetic feelings are hurt—much hurt—and then it is awfully hard not to care about self. I want the approval of my world, not satisfied with my Master's love and my Master's approval. If He and His love were more realities to me, I could bear anything and be content to be

[1] He had wished to enlarge and beautify St. Ann's, the church in the town.

nothing. Why am I so grieved about St. Ann's ? On account of the æsthetics. Because I do not like my church to be seen in such a state.

Nov. 25. I will continue to trust in Him, and will stay myself upon my God. Oh, at least, my Father, let me not dishonour Thee. O let me not oblige Thee to take away the trial by my own want of trust and submission.

About this period his self-accusations became exceedingly severe. The smallest inward movements of self-will or of spiritual pride were remorselessly set down, and treated as if they had been indulged and allowed their full swing. If a faithful friend told him that his preaching had been going off, he reproached himself for feeling vexed, as if he had committed a crime.

It may be said once for all, in references to such strictures upon the workings of his own heart, that no one but himself would ever have had the least idea that the temptation to these faults was there. All was perfectly restrained. Not a word, not a look, gave to his friends and associates a notion of the 'spiritual combat' that was taking place within. But the strain of all these labours, in his own soul and in public, coupled with the distress caused by the alienation of the Bishop, was too great for Wilkinson's strength. At the weekly meeting of the clergy on Nov. 24 he was obliged to report that the doctor, with whom he had spent the whole of the previous Monday morning, had laid it upon him, as an absolute necessity, to take a long rest, far away from all parochial anxieties. On the second Sunday in Advent he fainted.

To the Rev. T. Wilkinson

[December, 1865.]

You will have heard ere this from my Father that I am to go away in January for three months.

It has been a great trial, but I think now that I see it to be right. I wish that it could have been avoided, but it cannot. It is a blessing that I am comparatively speaking fresh, so that I hope a good rest will put me all right.

It took me quite by surprise, and it has been a weary time,

but now I think that I see my way clear and am happy once more.

God bless you, my very dear Uncle. When we have any plans, one of us will write. Meanwhile rest assured of our warmest affection.

To the same

Parsonage, Bp. Auckland: Dec. 19, 1865.

Very very many thanks, my dearest Uncle, for your warm and affectionate letter, so like your own kind self, and like what you have always been to us. *Many* thanks for it.

I have not seen your letter to my Father, but he told me that you had written most kindly, wishing everything to be done that would add to our happiness. I expect to see him towards the end of the week and then we shall talk matters over and make some definite arrangements.

Car is middling. . . . The days in which it was uncertain what was to be done tried her very much. She was so anxious that we should only do what was right, and yet she felt the need of my going. . . .

Dr. Canney is known to be a most clever doctor. . . . I feel what he says, that there is nothing wrong with me, except that I am overdone—the brain, as he expresses it, having been eating out the body. I feel that rest and quiet and change of scene and plenty of fresh air is all that I require. If I find that the three months has not the desired effect, then I should be very thankful on my return to see Dr. Walsh; but it seems now better on all grounds to leave my own doctor to feel that he is responsible and that we trust him. No words can tell how kind he has been to me. He said it was a hard trial to send me away, but that he feels so sure of the result.

Of course I know that the result is in Higher Hands than his, but I tell you all he says because I know, my dear Uncle, how anxious you are about us. . . . Canney says change of scene to prevent my thinking of my parish, exposure to the fresh air from morning to night, and as few business letters as possible, are the objects to be attained.

Lady Grey is at Cannes. I thought we might go quietly there, staying awhile on the road at places like Avignon (perhaps 2 or 3 days in Paris), then stop ten days with her and get a *vetturino* of some kind, with a vehicle that would open, and either go by easy stages across to Nice, Cornice, Genoa, &c.,

or take some other line more to the North, or perhaps turn in the other direction from Cannes and get to Spain. I once thought of Dresden, but then in winter we could not be out all day, and should be tempted to spend too much time in the picture galleries, whereas a few days about Nice and a few days about Mentone and a few days about Savona would give one lovely scenery and fresh air from morning till night.

I am thinking on paper, and you will tell me anything that strikes you, now you have admitted that it is *no longer* 'no concern of yours.' I am very glad that that phrase is gone. God has been so good to us. I cannot tell you how I feel the crowd of mercies that I have to acknowledge. That darling Carsie can go with me, that all the difficulties in money matters are so removed, that we have a good governess and nurse for the children, and my four curates all well known, each one an *alter ego*, are all such real blessings. Then my people are so kind—so warm about it—even those who I thought were almost against us, telling me how they had watched me, how needful it was, &c., &c., &c.

I feel that I must not think about it, or I shall not be able to do the great amount of work which still remains to be done. When I do think of it, as in writing this little paper, I break down, so it is no use. It has to be, and I feel so clear that it is right.

To Cannes, accordingly, he went; and there, after a time, he recovered health and spirits. It was at all times a solace and a strength to him to look upon a beautiful landscape, and the changing effects of sea and sky. These did their work for him, under the blessing of God.

To the Rev. T. Wilkinson

Cannes: Feb. 5, 1866.

This place is quite wonderful. The sun is like Naples—clear sky, roses, passion flowers, oranges, in all the rich luxuriance of the gardens of Sorrento—but at the same time the air is fresh and at times almost cold. There is such a change in the place since I was here ten years ago that I should hardly have known it. A perfect town has sprung up since I was last here. There is a lovely little church built by a Mr. Woolfield—a rich man

who had been travelling in Palestine and passed here on his way home. He found it so like Palestine that he determined to settle here—built a house and then a church. Over the church porch is this text, 'I will be to them a little sanctuary in all the countries to which they shall go.'

Car is wonderfully well. I do not quite know what to say about myself. I cannot sleep at night. Keep dreaming of every kind of wretched thing. This, however, will, I hope, pass away in time. Scarce a day passes that we do not speak of you and of your great kindness. My dearest Uncle, God Bless you and dear Aunt, and reward you a hundredfold for all your love to us.

To the same, from Mrs. Wilkinson

Feb. 24, 1866.

Quite suddenly the bright bracing air of Cannes, and the long drives and excursions that my Aunt took him, which kept him out for hours in the open air, his mind amused by the lovely scenery, seemed to tell upon him; he began to sleep wonderfully better and to eat well. He was quite thrown back a week by the sad shock he received in hearing of our good and most valuable friend Mr. Trotter's death. But he has now picked up again, and tho' I cannot say he looks anything very wonderful, yet he is now certainly gaining strength and health. God grant it may be continued! You may imagine what a shock Mr. Trotter's death was to us both. I dare not think of what a loss he will be to George. He was so truly good and generous, so devotedly fond of George! Whatever plan George made for the good of the parish, Mr. Trotter was always ready to support and help him.

For instance, when one Whitsunday G. H. determined to preach in the open air and expected a good deal of ridicule and bother on the occasion, when he and his curates arrived at the church, from whence they were all to walk down the village to the place for preaching, there was dear old Mr. Trotter waiting to head the procession. When there was a worry and difficulty about finding seats for people in church, Mr. Trotter went to church Sunday after Sunday three-quarters of an hour before the time and stood in the aisles to show people to seats, and filled his own pew so full that often he had no seat in it for himself. Then he was the only gentleman in the neighbourhood that took a District, and week after week went round

it leaving tracts. In fact I might fill pages with all he did, but whenever George had any worry or bother, our dear friend always tried to smooth it; he was always ready to help him and support him in every undertaking; his loss to us in the parish is irreparable, and as a friend it is very sad.

Oh, I must tell you that George preached once at Cannes, it was last Sunday! I was dead against his doing so, fearing that it would fatigue him too much; in fact George had made up his mind that he would not do so, but several things happened, which I will tell you when we meet, which made him [feel] he could not but do so, and even I was obliged to agree. He certainly did preach a beautiful sermon. When we went to dine with Aunt Grey in the evening, she came to him almost crying with excitement, saying that all her friends came up to her after church full of the beauty and solemnity of the sermon. Lady Abercorn said it nearly choked her, she felt it so. In fact I don't like to say what everybody said; I am not sure that it is right to talk so of a sermon when God put it into his heart to preach it. I should not tell anybody but you and the dear Aunt, but I know how much you love him, so we will rejoice over him and feel proud of him together. Poor old Lord Brougham was sitting just under the pulpit! . . .

I forgot to say that one of the clergymen who were staying at Cannes for [their] health (there were 24 in church I hear) came to George before he went away, and said he must thank him for his sermon, for he and all his brother clergymen had felt it had stirred them up and done them real good. . . .

To Mrs. Trotter

Maison du Rion, Cannes: Feb. 10 [1866].

I am so stunned and so miserable that I hardly know what I am doing. It seems so hard to be away from you all at the very time that I should have been some comfort, perhaps, to you. It feels as if we had lost not merely a friend but some near and dear relation. So many things come up to my mind as I write—our happy Sunday in London, and the fatherly way in which he talked to me, and tried so hard to persuade me to let him bear the expense of any Clergymen who might be engaged to help during my absence, and how almost pained he was when I told him that it was not necessary. So many, many acts of kindness come

to my mind that the tears begin to flow, and I feel it a mockery to try and comfort you, but I can and do pray, my dear Mrs. Trotter, that our own Saviour may give you that strength and consolation which He only can impart. We must trust Him, must we not? We must try to feel that He who gave His own Son to die for us can only be dealing with us in *love*, even though we cannot *understand* the meaning of this hard, hard trial; and, when we think a little, how much does spring up to show the love of our Lord! Is it not a mercy that his life was spared to give so many proofs of the new heart? . . . What an effort it cost him to go and cast in his lot with the poor men who were working for us as district visitors! How hard it was for him to go round those cottages, the only gentleman who came out publicly as a Visitor! And again how hard it was to stand out in the aisle and show the people to their seats; and again how much it cost him to go round begging for the new churches! But in all alike, as soon as he saw that it was his duty, he determined to do it and did it, and of that last Sunday in London so many happy recollections crowd upon my mind. With the tears in his eyes, he said 'I so longed to stay Holy Communion to-day, but I did not know whether it was right when I had not prepared!' Then, as we walked in the afternoon, we talked over a clever sermon that we had heard, in which the preacher, speaking of the Ethiopian Eunuch going on his way rejoicing, had explained it as referring to the happiness of having received a new idea and heard of the glorious life of Christ. I remember so well how we talked it over and agreed that it was such a miserable explanation—that any such pleasure was nothing compared to the joy to which the text referred, the joy of knowing of a Saviour's Blood and the pardon of sin. Then again, I remember so well how, one day when we were talking in his office, he told me how pained he had been to hear some one speaking of his own good deeds as any ground for claiming God's mercy, &c.

Oh, my dear Mrs. Trotter, I do trust that our Blessed Lord may make this letter the means of bringing some of the comfort to you which the writing of it has brought to myself! As I write I seem to feel how the Saviour has taken him whom we love quietly to Himself without the pain of a long lingering illness, to rest with Him for a while, till you are united to him, never, never to be parted for all Eternity. How merciful it has been to let him live to make us all sure and certain of his joyful

immortality, and then to take him without pain or suffering to Himself!

Our loss is indeed his gain. Oh, let us dwell upon the thought of that glorious land with no pain—no trouble—none of the disappointments which his kind heart was continually feeling when he was brought into contact with a cold, unsympathising world!

May you be strengthened, my dear Mrs. Trotter, to feel this, not all at once, but by degrees, under the teaching of our own loving Saviour.

To the Rev. C. Green

Cannes: April 11, 1866.

I am far stronger and feel better than I have done for many a long day. He has helped me wonderfully to cast the care upon Him, to live day by day, and to realise the truth of His own assurance that *all* will work together for good, and will in His time and in His way be rightly ordered. The only difficulty is to be sure what is His will, to be sure that self was put aside, &c. When I was in some anxiety on this point, a friend, accidentally, as man would speak, mentioned this text, 'Be ye not like to horse and mule, whose mouth must be held with bit and bridle—I will guide *thee with Mine eye*'—the idea being, Do not seek for such signs as will leave no room for doubt. Live in close union with the Lord, *looking* up to Him, and you will be guided by His eye, led, you scarce know how, to the city where you would be. It helped me much, and in answer to all that you kindly say, I think I can assure you all that I am at least trying to put my own wishes aside and to watch for an opening—for some indication of His will. I feel that it is a most important time in my life. To return too soon, or to stay away too long, might hinder so much of the Blessing which God may have in store for me. Nay, I may without presumption add, for *us*, for we are so bound together as fellow workers, and so linked with our dear communicants, that I feel much of our Father's Blessing flows down to us not as individuals but as members of the one Body. The work seems so glorious, the possibilities of the future so grand, that I dread making even one false step. . . .

Enough, however, on this head. My wife warrants my saying that I am looking at the question of my return in the spirit in which you would like me to regard it. She has all her own way now, no knocking for admission at study doors, but she rules supreme. If I become wrapped up in clerical conversations with

a wandering Brother, she moves me on to another town. If I begin to write after dinner, or open any heavy book, I am called to order in a moment. It is an unflinching discipline, but not disagreeable, in fact rather the reverse. I really did not appreciate how charming a wife I possessed. We are now renewing our acquaintance with each other, after some years of comparative separation, as work has left me very little time for the amenities of domestic life. It is very enjoyable, and I trust that of many a talk which we have together our children may reap the benefit in after years. . . .

We laughed immensely at the description of the criticism on recent Episcopal acts. . . . You have certainly spoken your mind without saying a word which the most severe critic could call into question. . . . I have met two men of different schools, who were in the Bishop's old Diocese. Both spoke of much personal kindness received, of firm trust in his goodness, &c., but both alike described the *letters* which they and others had received as unbearable. It is a comfort to hear this, but I earnestly wish that for the sake of the Diocese and for my own comfort the habit could be altered.

However, wherever we are there must be trial, and I can truly say that I have gained more spiritual teaching from the trials which followed *those letters* than I have received from all the happiness which I have enjoyed. God is good. When we look *back*, we see it as clearly as if it were written in His own Heavenly handwriting.

To the Rev. T. Wilkinson

[Cannes : April, 1866.]

My Father seems to have much enjoyed his visit to you. I am thankful you kept him quiet for a while, so that his trip did him good instead of harm. Harry and I have taken him in hand, and when he tells us how much he has crammed into one day we give him no encouragement. [Harry] says, 'Indeed, I am sorry you do not think more of your family;' and then he comes from Harry at Oswald House to me at Auckland, and still finds no response; so we have great hopes that 'Young George' will improve.

The Wilkinsons returned to England on April 23, 1866, arriving at the Pavilion Hotel, Folkestone, that afternoon. On the 25th, their daughter Ernestine was born in the hotel.

To the Rev. T. Myers

Pavilion Hotel, Folkestone: May 8, 1866.

This Influenza has pulled me down a great deal, but it has now gone, and I hope quickly to pick up again. I had a long talk the other day with an old friend who is a very able physician in London. He quite confirms all that Canney has said or done.

I told him all about my work and bothers, &c., and he says that I have just done the work of three men, and that if Canney had not sent me away there would have been a break-down.

The mistake which he says that I make is taking as much regular work as I can do and so leaving *no margin*. There ought to be, he says, a margin, so that when extra work or extra thinking or extra bother comes, I may have leisure of mind for it. He fully approves of my going home for the summer, but says that if I wish to continue, I must so arrange my work that much of it can be taken when I have no extra work, and laid aside when anything extra comes upon me as Incumbent. . . .

The work is so cheering—everything makes one so thankful—that unless it be indeed God's will and absolutely necessary I long not to be prevented from carrying it on. To break down and leave Auckland would try me more than I can tell you, and what makes me now in such good spirits is the feeling that by God's help I shall be able to go on, and have all that happiness which we have enjoyed together.

God bless you all!

Wilkinson resumed his work at Bishop Auckland on Sunday, June 10, with a sermon on the text, 'My hope of you is steadfast.' He notes in his diary:

This coming back full of trial. What will be the end thereof? At once my health gave way. At once Car's health gave way. Every meal was disturbed. We had no servants. Everything was in confusion. My heart was sad within me. And yet how many blessings have I! This kindly welcome. No want of money. C. C. W. and G. H. W. are as never before. One point of health all right. . . . God showed me this passage: 'To accept any manner of service, as the will of God decrees, to be equal in this life, whatever the outward form of it may involve'—to be indifferent to the mode, the place, the time, the whole outward circumstances—not indeed indifferent as

to feeling. Never let me forget how all the misery of last winter was really preparing me for going away, obliging me to go, preparing me for being absent. I know not what this means. I wished to be strong, I feel weak. All my own plans upset. Perhaps it is a preparation for death—perhaps for much life and work. He knows. Let self die, and Christ be glorified.

He was not left long before the sorrows which had made themselves felt returned. On Monday, June 18, while he was reading the Psalms for the day, of which, as he notes, one was the funeral Psalm, 'Lord, Thou hast been our refuge,' his father's life came violently to its end. Mr. Wilkinson was out with a gun after rabbits on his brother's property at Wingate. He had a careless way of carrying his gun low in his hand. The gun went off as he was walking through a plantation ; the charge went in at the back of his ear, and he died in an instant.

Wilkinson was immediately summoned. He went over to Wingate, but not before he had thought of the little duties which he was obliged to put off.

I remember, says Mrs. Williamson, being much impressed at Auckland with the Vicar's great consideration and thoughtfulness for others in all ways. He had arranged to see me one afternoon or evening when his Father died suddenly, and he had to rush off to Durham ; before starting he asked his wife to tell me he would do so as soon as possible after his return. He seemed never to forget anything or anyone, even in times of stress and strain.

He brought his father's body home to the house at Durham, where he was joined by his brother Henry. He wrote a little later to his uncle :

To the Rev. T. Wilkinson

Parsonage, Bp. Auckland : July 12, 1866.

My dearest Uncle,—I hope that by this time you have quite recovered from all your fatigue, and feel no bad effects from your trying journey to Oswald House. It seems like some dreadful dream—that long, dreary week. Even now there rises up continually before my mind the thought of that dismal day at Wingate—the little upper room, and the sheet over all—and

then, as I drew the sheet aside, everything just as I had always seen them, the boots and leggings and coat which I knew so well—everything the same except the face—I shall never forget it. Often I cannot believe it. I fancy that he is coming over, and catch myself saying to myself that I will ask his advice about this or that alteration, and then I remember that all our talks—so free, so happy, so like the talks of real friends as well as of father and son—all are over for this world. Hereafter it may be there will be happier talks, things made clear which now are dark, difficulties which beset our path here for ever removed. Then I am convinced we shall see that our Heavenly Father has done all in perfect love, as well as perfect wisdom. What we do not know now, we *shall* know hereafter—of this I feel more and more certain every day, that we shall be able to see that it is best as it is, but every day it seems more strange.

However it is no use writing more about it. One thing I long for, that we may all get all the good from it which God wishes that we should derive. If we believe that whom the Lord loves He chastens, that a time of trial is indeed the sound of our Lord Himself knocking at the door of our hearts, then such a trial as this, so sudden, so fearful, must be intended to bring us very, very near to Himself, to raise our hearts very far above this world, to make us far, far better than we were before. This is what I long for—that I may get real good from it—may be better able to live close to our Lord and ready at a moment's warning to meet Him, better able to help my people and to lead them onwards to their Heavenly home.

I am now quite myself again in body, and sleep better than I did. The only effect which remains is a sort of feeling as if the freshness of life were over. I know that this is only temporary, but I feel it very strongly just now. Very interested in my work, awfully anxious to help my people and by God's grace to get them made ready, speaking out more clearly than I have ever done, but at the same time not able to look forward or to feel much interest in my own life and my own future. I don't know how to put the feeling into words, but it is a sort of morbid feeling that if I do not live, then there is sorrow for others, and if I do live, then there is sorrow for myself in passing through such scenes as those with which last month made us familiar.

The antidote which I take for these morbid feelings is the Book of Revelation. . . . It gives such a glorious picture of

the Eternal Kingdom. The Father in all His glory seated on the Heavenly Throne, ordering everything which happens on earth. . . . The crystal sea before Him—the picture of His own nature—so calm, so deep—His thoughts not as our thoughts, but like the great deep, yet calm, peaceful, full of rest. Round the throne the emerald rainbow—all He does surrounded by the covenant of mercy. The colour on which the eye of man can rest with the greatest comfort, the emerald green—the rainbow first fixed in the clouds as a pledge of love, a pledge that in wrath He would remember mercy. . . .

As one dwells on the picture there seems to steal into one's heart a feeling that all is well. Here change and trial, but there rest and joy for evermore. Here for a little while to be broken down, till pride is humbled and self is crushed and we are brought with all our heart subdued—broken it may be by the thought of wasted days and sins which can never be recalled—broken and helpless to the foot of the cross, there to lie till His own words of pardon are spoken and His own peace steals into the heart, and we rise with less trust in ourselves, less confidence in our own ability, but far more happy, to live to Him and to try to love Him, feeling that round the judgment throne is the emerald rainbow and in the midst the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

God Bless you both, my dearest Uncle and Aunt. Many thanks for your warm letter of Tuesday.

Ever Yours affec.
G. H. W.

Always on the watch for occasions of thankfulness, he entered in his diary at the end of that sad week :

Mercies gradually revealed.
1. Perhaps to save from dreadful illness.
2. If not ready, more time in answer to prayer.
3. God's love.
4. His own wish.

To this is appended the note :

Trial in my own relations with Bishop being complicated.

A few days later he writes :

Gets worse as it goes on. Living for the day—day by day—only plan.

Then on the day of the funeral :

Weary and broken down. It seemed so hard to look forward and see all my work for Christ stopped—all the bright, happy work—and nothing but secular cares. 'Day by day' helped this, but *not all at once.* Mark this.

On Saturday night I woke up cold and yet hot—faint, as if all my nerves were shattered. I got up. I went down. I got some candles. I made up my mind for no rest and just *threw* myself upon God. Only to be compared to the night before Mission Week. At last sleep. Blessing of Holy Communion on Sunday—not at the time, but after. I saw then that all was in His hands, health, work, parish, all. He would order. Day by day. 'Be ye not like to horse and mule.' Perhaps better not do so much parish work. Perhaps better to have self crushed, and have people speak slightingly of parish neglected, &c. . . . . Just cling.

In the circumstances it is not surprising that Wilkinson did not recover his health and spirits as rapidly as had been hoped. Work and self-discipline were a constant struggle.

Saturday, July 14. It seems so strange, nearly every day begins with weakness and utter weariness. By degrees God helps me, but it seems so strange. I know He is love, but weakness of body with dull, stupid heaviness tries me much, and what it all means I know not. Yet many mercies mingled with trial.

Wednesday, July 18. Worrying about money generally shows me that I am not well.

On Monday, August 20, he was once more laid up and unable to do anything for a month but to keep an eye on the work from his sick room.

To the Rev. C. Green

Parsonage, Bishop Auckland : Aug. 23, 1866.

There is nothing, I think, which I need ask you to do for me to-day, except. . . . to call at a sort of second-hand shop exactly opposite the foot of Tenters Street, at which Mackenzie works. I fancy he was to look in and see me to-night. If so, ask him to postpone his visit, and if there be any pressing matter to mention it to you.

Many thanks for the 'Curé d'Ars.' It is intensely interesting—in many ways. The strong development of Mariolatry, mingled with an evident outpouring of Heavenly Blessing vouchsafed in spite of that which seems the most vital of all errors, suggests much thought. Again the intensity of religious feeling which seems to be aroused by localising the presence of our Lord in 'The Blessed Sacrament.' It is all interesting and rather perplexing.

I am much the same—no cause for any anxiety—only time required to let the thing run its course. . . . It is perhaps the best way for me to keep this week—fraught as it is with so many solemn thoughts. This day three years I preached my first sermon at St. Ann's. How many mercies have we received since then . . . and even more, how good the trials have been! How wonderfully our Lord has been leading us to trust simply to His strong arm and not to depend on any earthly supports! . . .

A time of weakness, he writes in his diary. On the 17th [August] went down to Redcar. On the 20th was laid up with sort of scarlatina, and did not recover for some time. On September 12 I began to review my life. 'Search me, O God, and prove me. Try me, and examine my heart.'

1. The way in which any *worry* rests upon and crushes my spirit, whether it be the Bishop, or A., or money difficulties. All alike crush me and come up in midst of prayers, in midst of everything. The only *remedy* to cast myself upon Jesus Christ, pleading His own words, 'Abide in Me.'

2. I am still careless about *the body*. . . . Then I am tempted in my illness to dwell *too much* on it. I find myself . . . making the worst of it. . . .

3. I am sadly wanting in . . . interest for individuals. Some one said, 'You care for them as a whole, but not as individuals.' A truth in this. Each one soul, each one redeemed, marked with cross, part of temple of Holy Ghost—temple of Holy Ghost, himself, herself, with capacities for never-ending life in Heaven.

4. I am much wanting in all Love, all real love to my Father—Saviour—Spirit. This springs from want of Faith. I want meditation to produce Faith, and Faith to produce Love, and all alike the gift of God.

5. Again, I soon lose tranquillity. I am soon distressed by a

stranger coming, a little fresh work. I lose the union with my God and find it hard to return.

6. I am wanting in little acts of home kindness, to my wife, to my children. So very little makes them happy.

A visit of ten days or so to Dr. Macleod at Linlithgow brought him some refreshment, but he returned to Auckland on October 9 only to plunge again into overwork and to suffer from an attack of influenza. He persevered, and did his duty in spite of it; but he suffered from it in spirit as well as in body.

To the Rev. T. Wilkinson

Parsonage, Bp. Auckland: Nov. 11, 1866.

. . . Now I am better after having said that [some banter about Oxford and Cambridge]. You will say, better in the same sense that the Scotch Minister was better, who after his Sabbath sermon went up to his vestry to meet his elders, and said, speaking of his sermon, 'Well, I feel much relieved that that is over.' 'So you ought, minister,' said the sexton, 'after having got so much trash off your stomach.' 'Dulce est desipere in loco.' Let us pass on to something else.

I am so sorry to hear of all your worry and trouble, my dear Uncle. How surely as life rolls on, care and anxiety does increase, till one begins to realise the fact that man *is* born to sorrow, as the sparks fly upwards. I have been preaching for two Sundays out of that 12th of Hebrews, and it has done me much good and comforted me under a great deal of trial and anxiety. . . .

I sketched the round of a clergyman—the misery into which he might be brought into contact in the course of a single day. . . . Trial, sickness, anxiety, death everywhere: the older we grow the more we realise it. The more the roll of life is unfolded, the more does it seem to be written within and without with lamentation and mourning and woe. Then we ask, 'What is the key to this riddle of life? Who is the God with whom we have to do? Is He some hard tyrant who delights in the sufferings of His children?' No—He is a Father. What then does it all mean?

Then I worked out the object and blessings of affliction in all its varied forms of sickness, worry, pain, disappointment,

bereavement. I showed that for beings living in a fallen world, possessors of a fallen nature, and yet in course of preparation for an eternal life to be spent with God in Heaven—for beings such as these suffering was needed as a remedial discipline. . . .

Then come the different Blessings of affliction.

1. It helps us to glorify God. . . . What a Blessing it will be, if hereafter we can feel that in dark hours we put our trust in Him, that when we were weak and feeble and out of heart we were able in any sense to say 'Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight.'

But you will be tired of my sermon.

2. The way in which trial enables us to help others—the power which it gives us if we can lay our hands on a man's shoulder and say, I have felt what you are feeling. I am no stranger to this loss, this dark hour, this bereavement. God helped me to bear it. He will help you to bear it. This was the way in which I was helped, &c.

3. The numberless lessons which we then learn. How much more we see of our own sins when we are in trouble than in the brighter hours of life! We find out faults which we never knew before, we see an emptiness in the world which we never saw before, we realise as we never realised, till those whom we loved were taken from us, how unreal is everything in this world, how the world above alone is true and lasting. . . .

It is a long, rambling letter, my dear Uncle, but I know you do not mind how long my letters are.

Harry has just been in to tell me his news.[1] Dear old lad. The last year has drawn me very closely to him, and I have long felt that it would be well for him to be married, and if Lilly makes him such a wife as her sister is to me, he will indeed have reason to be thankful. You better than anyone know what my own darling wife is to me, how again and again I have reason to thank God for giving her to me. God Bless you both, my dear Uncle and Aunt, and long spare you to us.

To the Rev. C. Green

Parsonage, Bp. Auckland: Sept. 8 [1866].

I was so sorry, after you left, that I had said a word which might weaken your trust in your preaching to-morrow. How-

[1] His younger brother had just become engaged to a sister of Mrs. Wilkinson's.

ever hard-hearted a few may be, I have lately come to the conclusion that it is better, when inclined to speak against them, to hold one's tongue, and instead of talking *about* them to offer up a prayer *for* them.

Besides I feel sure that God has great blessing in store for the parish if only we do not grieve the Holy Ghost by any want of trust.

What my own future may be is uncertain, but I have an increasing conviction that there is abundant blessing in store *for the parish*. This is not the result of mere sanguine temperament, but a deliberate conviction increasing day by day as I sit quietly in my own room.

I am therefore very sorry that by a single word I should do the Devil's work, and even appear to doubt the truth of our Father's promises. Oh, that He may draw us so near to our Saviour, and so burn out of us all that is low and earthly and self-seeking, that His blessed Word may have free course in us and by us and be glorified!

From Mrs. Wilkinson to the Rev. T. Wilkinson

The Parsonage, Bishop Auckland: July 7 [1866].

All my afternoons this week have been spent in paying visits, G. H. thinking that one great work of the Parish Clergyman's wife is to call often upon all the respectable people in the town . . . from the Doctors' wives to retired greengrocers' wives. So I am continually going my rounds, for there are such numbers of them in a town like this, that I have no sooner come to the end, when it is time to begin again. I think it is a good thing; it seems to make such a kind feeling towards the clergyman, and then I get to hear many a little thing that is useful to G. H. . . . I must say the people here do appreciate G. H., and that is a great, great comfort. I could not help feeling pleased yesterday: a man who does not seem to care about anything, and I fear about religion least of all, seemed really quite unhappy to see G. H. looking worn and tired. He said, 'If Mr. Wilkinson would only take care of himself and feel how valuable he is to us—if he only is well enough to keep a guiding hand over the Parish and to sit in his study for us to consult with, we'd be thankful; so he must not fash hisself to do all he has done, but just keep hisself well enough to stay with us as our Pastor, for we *should* miss him if he were to leave us.'

CHAPTER IV

DIFFICULTIES WITH THE BISHOP

MATTERS with the Bishop meanwhile were fast becoming unbearable. To the increasing divergence between the two men in opinion and general feeling was now added a difference of policy in one definite question of pressing importance. The question has been already alluded to in various extracts from letters and journals. The Rev. Henry A. Mitton, now Master of Sherburn Hospital, who succeeded Wilkinson as Vicar of Bishop Auckland, states the position thus:

> The ancient parish church of St. Andrew stood apart, about a mile out of the town, while in the town itself was only St. Ann's, a chapel of ease, comparatively small, and rendered to a large extent useless by the appropriation of the sittings, which were regularly bought and sold, as though private property. Bishop Baring was exceedingly anxious for a new Church and new Parish [to be carved out of the ancient parish and made independent of it] but on the last point a difficulty arose. Mr. Wilkinson was then at the height of his influence and popularity, and could not bear the thought of letting go a large and important part of the parish.

It is perhaps hardly necessary to say, and Mr. Mitton would be the first to say it, that Wilkinson's objection to the division of the parish was not due to love of power and dislike of losing any portion of it. He was keenly alive to the advantages of preserving unity in a town like Bishop Auckland. The letter which he wrote to his uncle on May 2, 1864,[1] shows how important he felt it to be that there should not be within such an area rivalries of teaching and glaring contrasts of practice.

The situation, as it stood towards the end of 1866, is set forth

[1] See above, p. 109.

from the point of view of a domestic partisan in the following letter.

From Mrs. Wilkinson to the Rev. T. Wilkinson

Bp. Auckland : Dec. 15, 1866.

Thank God I am very flourishing, though I have had a cold—but I am wonderfully better for my winter abroad ; this is the first winter for years that I have not had a terrible cough long before this time in the winter. How I wish I could say as much for darling G. H. He is looking very thin and worn. He has had a great deal of work forced upon him lately—far more than he really has strength for ; he has also had a great deal of worry of one kind or another, and it has told upon him sadly. But in speaking of his having much to worry him, we must also be thankful that he has also much to cheer and encourage him. There is still a deep work going on in the parish ; at this present moment there are about six men in different parts of the parish, who, as far as I can make out, have not been worse than most men—utterly broken down and crushed by the sense of their sins—anxiously asking ' What am I to do to be saved ? ' begging for teaching, and praying earnestly for God's forgiveness. G. H. meets them continually for teaching and for prayer. It is a great blessing to see the ' Spirit of God moving upon the face ' of the parish, for when dark, desponding times come, one can count up these rays of light, and they give one fresh hope.

I think I told you some little time ago that our afternoon congregation was so small, that it was scarcely worth the trouble of providing the service. G. H. thought that, as the people always follow where he preaches, he had better take an afternoon course of sermons himself, hoping that the congregation would improve. He began a course of sermons on the Revelation, and we have had full congregations every Sunday afternoon. Several of the leading Dissenters have attended these services, I suppose from curiosity, and I was *told* one of them said the other day, that he had heard Bishops, Priests and Deacons preach, but that all put together could not preach like Mr. Wilkinson. Pleasant for the wife to hear, was it not ?

We are both very anxious about a meeting that is D.V. to take place on Monday evening next at 8 o'clock. I told you some time ago, how that many people in this Parish were so stirred up by a Lecture given by a Mr. Brame, Secretary for Curates' Aid Society, that they became very anxious to do *some-*

thing in this Parish to cure the terrible want of church room. After much anxiety shown on the part of the people, G. H. granted their wish of calling a meeting of parishioners. At this meeting seven plans were proposed—three of which (I think) were chosen by different little parties in the room. This made it advisable to appoint a Committee from those different parties, which should consider those plans and choose one from them. When this plan was agreed upon as being the wish of the parish, it was to be laid before the Bishop, and his consent was to be begged (humbly begged, I ought to say, for the Bishop requires his people to be very abject—humble scarcely expresses the amount of honour and respect that he requires). This said Committee has been *sitting* about once a week since they were appointed, and 'my word,' as my little Geordie says, they have *sat* from 8 o'clock till past 11. I am quite sure that eight women would have got thro' all the business in half the time. . . .

At the last Monday Meeting the Committee were all very amiable to each other. They agreed that the best plan for the good of the parish was to build a large free church—to cost about 4,000*l.* They felt that their first plan of a District New Church would be of little use, for (as one of them remarked) wherever Mr. Wilkinson preached the people would go. I must tell you that all thro', altho' the people tried all means to find out what G. H. wished for, he has kept silence, feeling that it would be far better for the Parish to settle all this itself. If the laymen had the doing of it, they would take far more interest in it. When *this* was settled, G. H. said that if the rest of the Committee would make up between them the sum of 800*l.*, he would give 200*l.*, so that they might go to the Public Meeting on Monday with 1,000*l.* to start with. This has been done; is it not glorious? especially so when I tell you that nearly all that have given, have never helped anything much before. A solicitor that never cared about church matters before gives 200*l.*, another 100*l.*—our Doctor Canney 100 guineas—and he never cared about church till lately, and now he is *hot* about it.

Well, on Monday all these proceedings are to be laid before the Public. They are queer people, these North country fellows, and they may take weeks to make up their minds whether they will accept this said plan, or they may take any strange fancy—so naturally we are anxious *very* about this next Public Meeting.

Then we have another rock to pass—the Bishop's leave has to be obtained, and he is awfully crotchety—more so than anybody

who does not know him personally can imagine ; he may smash all our plans—and there will be the end of all our labour. It will be like a Lion's Paw stamping upon an Ant hill—and I fear that if the paw does come down, the ants will be in a very frantic state, for they are very hot about their little idea at present.

The public meeting was held on Monday, December 17, 1866. The ' Auckland Chronicle ' of the following Friday reports that the proceedings were of the most encouraging and enthusiastic kind. The best of good feeling and unanimity pervaded the whole meeting ; and seldom has a public meeting been held in Bishop Auckland where so much public spirit and generosity has been shown. The meeting was full of hope and encouragement for the future, and presented every indication of a cordial and speedy solution of the great want of church accommodation ; so long and so seriously felt in the parish. The scheme submitted by the committee is one which at once recommends itself to all as the simplest and most efficient that could be submitted for approval, and we trust that the generous and hearty commencement is but the forerunner of many others, and that this question will soon be finally settled both to the credit of the town and the benefit of the whole of the inhabitants.

The report of the Committee, which had been appointed at an earlier public meeting on October 24, stated that the only possible plan was one of these three : (1) the enlargement of St. Ann's ; (2) to divide the town by forming a new Ecclesiastical District ; (3) to erect a new church, to be worked by the incumbent of the mother church, in addition to the existing churches of St. Andrew and St. Ann. The suggestion for the enlargement of St. Ann's, they considered, would be too costly, and they foresaw that it would be difficult to obtain consent to such a serious encroachment upon the Market-place as it would involve. They had carefully considered the second scheme, which had the strong advantage of an offer from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners of 300*l.* a year by way of endowment. ' They cannot ignore,' the report said, ' the peculiar obstacles which at present exist against forming a new district. They are obliged also to acknowledge the difficulties which would of necessity attend any division of the town, whenever it might be effected.' They called atten-

tion, by way of illustration, to the difficulty of drawing a satisfactory boundary line for such a district, of providing it with schools, and of arranging a burial ground for it. They added 'the unwillingness of many old parishioners to entertain the idea of being for ever separated from all the associations of the parish church of St. Andrew's.'

'So strongly has the weight of these difficulties pressed upon the Committee,' they said, 'that one of their number, who, in the general meeting [of October 24], proposed the division of the town'—this was Mr. Proud, the secretary of the Committee—'has deemed it right in Committee to second the resolutions, which are now laid before this meeting, with the entire recommendation of that body.' The resolutions were that it was 'not desirable at present to carve out from the town of Bishop Auckland a new Ecclesiastical District;' that a new church should be erected, to be worked by the aid of an additional curate, whose stipend, if not provided by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, should be raised by the parishioners, and that the new church should be so situated that it might afterwards become the parish church of a new district, if deemed desirable; that it should contain at least 800 sittings, entirely free and unappropriated; and that contributions should be paid by instalments.

The Committee laid it down that the consent of the Bishop, as was obvious, must be obtained, both as Diocesan and as patron of the living. A letter from him was read which said, 'When the Committee have completed the task assigned to them, and the general meeting have adopted with tolerable unanimity some one plan, and have approved of its details, as well as its rough outline, and the detailed plan is laid before me by the Chairman of the meeting, I will give it my careful consideration, and will readily give my formal consent to it, if I can do so consistently with my duty.' It was announced that Mr. James Thompson had offered to give a suitable site of 1000 square yards, with the coal underlying the same; that a guarantee fund for the curate had already reached 70*l.* a year. No canvass of public opinion had been made before the meeting.

After considerable discussion, and the proposal of an amendment in favour of dividing the parish, the vicar said that it was his wish that the subject should be thoroughly ventilated, and that he felt much obliged to the gentleman who had put so clearly before the meeting the advantages of forming a new District.

For long, he said, I have purposely abstained from expressing any wish as to the plan which should be adopted. To such an extent have I carried this reticence, that many were perplexed, and asked what was the opinion which I had really formed. My reason for so acting was the strong desire which I entertained that no fancy of my own should be pressed upon the parish. To-night, however, it is right that I should speak freely. I fully agree with the Report. When I think of the liberal subscriptions which have been promised, and when I look round and see the enthusiasm which has been displayed to-night, when I see the unanimous manner in which that Report was received, I am full of hope for the future, and above all full of thankfulness to that God who has so far answered the prayers of His people. . . . I rejoice to feel there is a hope of a church to which every man may go, however lowly his position, however ragged his coat. If I were to express half the thoughts which throng upon my mind, I should seem to you a wild and excited enthusiast. . . . I hope that at the end of two years those whose lives are spared will see in this parish a church erected, to which all, down to the poorest child, may point and say, 'I was able to put at least one brick into that building; I was able to help in raising that House of God.'

When the question was put, only two hands were held up in favour of the scheme for division. The result was duly conveyed to the Bishop. As Mrs. Wilkinson had dreaded, the episcopal 'paw' came down. The Bishop wrote back to say 'that he could not consent to a plan that would place three churches under the care of one incumbent, however earnest and able he might be.'

From Mrs. Wilkinson to the Rev. T. Wilkinson

Bishop Auckland: Dec. 29, 1866.

I wish it were not *the* Bishop's Auckland. You cannot imagine what a cold wet blanket has been thrown upon all the

zeal that has been awakened; what a real and sad disappointment the Bishop's refusal of the petition has been to numbers in this parish. What a blank it has thrown upon our Christmas rejoicings. Rich and poor, all feel it alike. We all seem to think of little else and certainly talk of nothing else. In fact it has thrown a regular blight upon us all. A working man said yesterday, 'Oh, if the Bishop only knew how we have all longed for a church where we might go and worship without a fear of being turned out of a seat, or perhaps of not finding a place to sit in at all! I know that numbers of working men in this parish had made up their minds to put a certain amount of their wages away weekly in order to help to build the new free church. But we shall not feel the same towards a new District church. We should hate to be divided as a parish, and none of us would like to be parted from Mr. Wilkinson, whom we all respect and love so much.' I fear there is little hope for us now.

On Thursday, February 7, 1867, another public meeting was called to reconsider the question. Mr. W. D. Trotter, the chairman, had received another letter from the Bishop of Durham, written from Bonchurch on the 4th, in which he said:

It appears to me very inexpedient to start any plan for the formation of a new District so long as there is a 'great aversion' to that plan, as stated in the letter of the Committee to me, entertained generally by the inhabitants of Bishop Auckland. Although the plan of the formation of a new District is the *only one* out of the many recently suggested, to which I could give my consent, I should not be disposed to give that consent until I was assured that the proposal met with the hearty good wishes and support of the whole body of friends to Church extension in Bishop Auckland.

A resolution was again carried, and again with only two dissentients, that it was 'not desirable to build any church that would necessitate the division of the town into two parts.' The chairman thereupon rose and advocated the pulling down of St. Ann's Church, and the rebuilding of it upon a larger scale. This scheme had not before been fully considered, but only the enlargement of St. Ann's. He thought that in this way the division of the parish might be avoided, and yet the objection of the Bishop to having three churches would be met.

This new proposal was seconded by Wilkinson. He said that when this church movement first commenced he was for many reasons disposed to support a plan for the division of the town. The more, however, that he had considered the subject, the more convinced he felt that the division would be detrimental to the best interests of the Church. It relieved the incumbent of none of the real burdens of the parish. The outlying districts and all the schools would still remain under his care. He would still have a mixed population of the town and country people, would still have the same responsibility of providing for districts which he could not efficiently superintend. The portion of the town of Bishop Auckland which remained in the old parish would be left with no other church but St. Ann's. All its well-known disadvantages would remain unaltered, with the additional grievance that many years must elapse before anyone could hope that these evils would be removed. In this one small town they would have, side by side, two sets of Church Schools, two sets of teachers and visitors—it might be two different systems of teaching. For these and other reasons he was decidedly opposed to any plan which involved a division of the town. At the same time he wished it to be distinctly understood that, in opposing a division of the town, he was far from opposing a division of the parish. If the consent of the inhabitants could be secured, he would facilitate to the utmost the formation of any District by which the town of Bishop Auckland would be left whole and undivided. As the Bishop, however, felt that no steps should be taken to form a new District without the hearty support of all well-wishers to Church Extension, he thought that the proposal of the chairman was the best that could be adopted in the circumstances.

The resolution was carried *nemine contradicente*, and it was agreed that it should be laid before the Bishop, with his Lordship's permission, at his next visit to the North, and that the existing committee should be charged with the task of doing it.

All, however, did not pass off with perfect quietness. One gentleman, though he afterwards disavowed any intention of

saying what would give pain to the vicar, had the hardihood to insinuate that the vicar had changed his mind, and that there was something not wholly straightforward in the course which he had taken. A storm of disapproval broke upon the man, and Mr. Trotter warmly, and amidst prolonged applause, defended Wilkinson against the supposed aspersion. But the sensitive spirit of the vicar was deeply hurt. He had known before that such things were being said—and amongst others by the Bishop. He wrote in his diary on November 10, 1866 :

How mysterious are God's dealings. We pray for guidance, for help ; persons come forward to volunteer to aid us ; everything looks hopeful ; and then comes this terrible back-cast. The work thrown back. My character attacked. I know how much suffering I need. I know how much has to be burned out of me, but it is very strange and mysterious. One thing there must be, humility and trust.

Was it a mere snare of Satan, blinding my eyes, and making me

Yield with raw haste, half-sister of delay ?

Was it a part of God's will ? or was it my own self will ? It does no good to ask. The trial must teach me something. How needful is the prayer that God will assist us in the prayers which we make before Him in all our troubles and adversities whensoever they oppress us.

What is taught ?

1. Straightforward.
2. Thought of all persons who may be affected by my conduct.
3. To be content to stand alone.
4. To cease from man.

Doubtful—whether I ought to have said nothing. . . .

Great mercies

1. In W. D. T[rotter] coming in.
2. Letter stopped.
3. In line taken by Committee.

W. D. T.'s interview [with the Bishop] very strange. He told him how much he valued, &c., &c., what he thought of my work, &c., &c., &c. So he went on. Yet he thinks that for two years I have been working on in an underhand way, &c., &c., &c.

It is very strange. In some respects things look brighter, but not in others. What to do as regards myself? How to clear my own character with the Bishop—how to prevent him speaking as he has done of me. Yet the future of Church work looks brighter than it ever did. Yet—how much is there of worry and of anxiety in the future.

Nov. 24. Saturday brought final letter from the Bishop—at least final for a time. I have learnt, I hope,

1. How much I depend on opinion of men.
2. How much I want firmness.
3. The need of sufficient rest and quiet, so as to be prepared when these trials come.

The Bishop had in fact spoken freely of Wilkinson's conduct as 'jesuitical,' and the holding of the meeting on February 7 brought his displeasure to a climax. He had somehow formed the conviction that before leaving his diocese for a long stay in the South of England, which was rendered necessary by Mrs. Baring's health, he had received from Wilkinson a promise that no further steps should be taken in the matter until after his return. As Mr. Mitton says, in a letter to the writer of this Memoir, 'no one who knew Mr. Wilkinson would believe that he would ever consciously have broken his word.' The exact facts are not now recoverable. It may be that Wilkinson only understood himself to be pledged not to proceed with the scheme to which the Bishop had objected, and felt that the pledge did not apply to a wholly new scheme, such as that proposed at the meeting. The fact remains that the Bishop, who had long been irritated against him, now held that he had distinctly played him false. He said so without reserve. He expected from Wilkinson an acknowledgment to that effect. Unhappily, while this condition of estrangement continued, the incident of the napkin, to which Mr. Green has referred in a letter already given, took place. The Bishop sent the vicar a note telling him that he had received information from a parishioner that the curate had introduced the 'wearing of a napkin with a fringe over his arm,' and desiring that this strange vestment should be at once discontinued. The vicar wrote back to say that he was calling a

meeting of his churchwardens, 'as legal representatives of the parishioners,' to advise him how 'to avoid such a system of anonymous accusations being established' in the parish, and said that he could have little comfort in the Church's service, if even at the Holy Communion he might unintentionally 'furnish a communicant with materials for widening that breach which most unhappily had been made between his Lordship and himself.' The Bishop retorted that the communication was not anonymous; that the best way to prevent such appeals to the Bishop was 'to avoid the introduction of novelties'; and that the question whether persons so appealing ought beforehand to acquaint the clergyman with their intention of doing so must depend 'on their amount of confidence in him, and whether they think he can bear to be told of his faults.'

In connexion with the last cut in the Bishop's letter, it may be mentioned that on All Saints' Day of the previous year Mr. Green had felt it his duty to take Wilkinson to task for some fault which he had observed in him. He could not afterwards remember what the fault was. But Wilkinson never forgot what had happened. His diary contains the entry, in an emphatic hand, 'Walk with Green in the Park,' and year by year the memory of that walk and its lesson recurred to his grateful mind. Here are specimens of notes to that effect.

To the Rev. C. Green

St. Peter's Vicarage, 2 Grosvenor Gardens, S.W.:
25 October, 1881.

Why not give an address to the few of my earnest people who as yet have returned, on All Saints' Day at 5 P.M. . . . It would be very nice on that day, above all days. You remember that walk which we had in the Park in Auckland.

Lis Escop, Truro: 31 Oct. 1883.

This day always links me with you, and in the midst of a very busy week I must send you a single line of remembrance. God bless you always, and give you back all you have done for me.

Norfolk Hotel, Harrington Road, S.W. : 21 Oct. 1896.

Shall you be able to come to luncheon Saturday 31st—the anniversary of that never to be forgotten walk in Auckland Park after a Rural Decanal meeting at Brancepeth ?

It was not to be wondered at that the winter of 1866 and the earlier part of 1867 were a period of much bodily as well as mental suffering.

Jan. 19, 1867. Strange how nervous I was made by a letter from the Bishop about nothing but a matter of business.

Feb. 9. How one looks back and sees mistakes in the past. Even so I fear lest in all that I am doing I should be making mistakes and shall look back and find that I have done so. Well, He knows. He knows the evil, and the desire to be good, the desire to please Him. Lord, lighten my darkness.

Feb. 16. I am ill, low, weak, nervous. Everything is a burden. I must face it. I must first count my mercies.

1. With no anxiety about O[swald] H[ouse].
2. With church business off my hands till Confirmation is over.
3. With no money difficulties.
4. Allowed to taste Christ's suffering, to know something of what He felt. ' Oh that I had the wings of a dove that I might flee away and be at rest.' Rest, silence, quiet. How different from all this worry! How He must have felt it!

Sins—Want of earnestness. Growing careless about devotion. Impatience and want of love.

Feb. 22. I must try by God's help and get strength. Little things worry me so much. . . . I must go forth in the strength of the Lord God. I am His child—the son who was dead and who am now alive again. To say words of contempt is to go forth in the strength of man. Here is an opportunity

1. For trust in God.
2. For silence. . . .
3. For straightforward, holy courage. . . .
4. I may learn how dependent I am upon God.
5. Perhaps (though I trust not) for more suffering, for power to taste more of the Lord's bitter cup.

Wednesday, March 13. Proud [the churchwarden] with abstract of Bishop's letter. Then, worn out, weary, ill.

A day of dreariness is Wednesday—always. The Confirmation passed off well and I had a pleasant ride with Harry, but then came a time of utter dreariness and weariness. Then Proud brought his note. . . . Then my own spirit, but I went alone, and though my prayers were cold and dreary, the comfort was not denied. It came afterwards.

I wonder why my Father gave it to me. Was it in love, to make the real letter less trying—or was it to chasten me for my sin? I think the latter. Thank God, Lent is revealing sin—in thought, in word and deed. Though I am better in rising, still far from right. Still need to go early to bed and to rise early and watch.

I feel so weak and ill and worn. How ill, no one knows but myself. Head weary, spirits low. I know it is body. I do not wish to repine. I ought to acknowledge that it is all good, that He does all things well; but 'oh ye of little faith.'

A short visit to Lady Londonderry at Wynyard on January 5 must have been a relief and pleasure, bringing the satisfaction of feeling that, whatever differences he had with his present patron, his differences with his first patroness were over. The masterful old lady had lately parted with a servant who had been with her for some years. 'I think,' she said, 'you have been happy with me.' The man answered, 'Oh, my lady, indeed I have good reason to thank God that I came to you. I have received great good to my soul since I came to you.' 'Ah, Scott,' Lady Londonderry answered, 'it is not through me that you have got all this good; it is through that good Mr. Wilkinson.'

To the Rev. T. Wilkinson, from Mrs. Wilkinson

One of the footmen kept dancing attendance on G. H. and did everything for him that it was possible to do. When G. H. went up to pack his things before leaving, he found this man had just finished doing all for him. So G. H. just spoke to him about his soul, as he had an opportunity of speaking to him alone, and then it came out that he had been one of G. H.'s Seaham congregation, and had been under a good religious butler that G. H. had also been a great help to. So the man was full of all this and so grateful to G. H. for having a talk and some prayer with him. It is wonderful how God makes

openings for G. H. to do good wherever he goes. Perhaps He does really for us all, only we don't take advantage of them. I look back with such regret upon so many occasions that I might have used for God's glory or said a helping word—but how difficult it is !

Other encouragements were not wholly wanting.

To the Rev. T. Wilkinson, from Mrs. Wilkinson

B. A. : Jan. 19, 1867.

G. H. seems to be getting quite a name in the Diocese. John Grey told Aunt Grey lately that no clergyman in the Diocese was more respected than G. H. You will think I write about nothing but G. H. and his praise, but I write to you so often that I cannot help my feelings being expressed as I write, and as I admire G. H. beyond measure, and respect him beyond all duty of respect to my husband, and love him—perhaps too much—I naturally treasure up any praise that others may give him, when I think they mean it really.

From the same, to the same

B. A. : Feb. 2, 1867.

G. H. gave a beautiful address for an hour and a half. The people seemed most deeply interested. For the first hour I enjoyed it much. G. H. seldom goes to these outlying parts of the parish during the winter—so I suppose he thought he would make the best of the opportunity. I think I never heard so much contained in one address in my life. He laid down sound and excellent principles for the guiding of their lives—he went through a whole history of the Church—showed the advantages of the Church over Dissent. Then he launched out into an explanation of some of the Church prayers, and showed how they might be used privately—and on and on and on, till I thought he never was going to stop. Over and over again, when I thought he was surely going to stop (I, having been very busy in my house all day, was very tired), but off he went again upon a new subject—I felt quite ashamed of being so tired, while all the people kept up their attention so well. He did not stop until nearly half past nine. Two hours speaking straight off is a good deal, when you have been trying to make yourself pleasant for two hours before. However, the evening

was very much liked and enjoyed by the people, and I think did good, and helped to make a nice, kindly feeling.

To the Rev. T. Wilkinson

Parsonage, Bp. Auckland: Feb. 16, 1867.

I am preparing for to-morrow on Revelation viii. 1, 'There was silence in Heaven.' The blessing which it will be to be quiet—to be away from all the strife of tongues and row and noise and bustle and squabbling and fighting on earth—to feel that the storm is over and that we are resting calmly on the shore. To know that the war drum peals no longer, that the battle is over, the struggle with evil ended, and that we are quietly resting on the hill side, looking over the battle field and thanking God that we have conquered. How blessed will be that quiet, silent half hour! The beginning of that rest which knows no ending.

Then how to prepare for it.

i. By quietness, holding our tongue, overcoming evil with good, not trying to push ourselves forward, being content to be last of all, to be misunderstood as our Lord was misunderstood, &c., &c.

ii. By being often alone with God—'Commune with thy own heart and be still.' Trying in quiet study of His word and quiet prayer to be alone with Him, to shut out our world, whatever it may be, as surely now, as it will be hereafter excluded in that city of rest and peace. If one could only get into the habit of dwelling upon that Eternal home, of realising something of its blessing, how much less we should be fretted with all the worries and troubles and vexation of this world.

From Mrs. Wilkinson to the Rev. T. Wilkinson

Parsonage, Bishop Auckland: April 13 [1867].

G. H. had hoped to have preached in the open air last Sunday afternoon, to get hold of the *outsiders* in every sense of the word, and to try to get them to start going to church. (He did this two[1] years ago, on opening St. Andrew's for the summer, with great good effect.) However, as the weather was very doubtful (and rain would have caused a failure) he did not give any notice of this open-air preaching; intending on the Sunday morning, if really fine, to send out several men belonging

[1] A mistake for three.

to his Bible Class, with 1000 hand bills he had printed all ready. These men were all prepared to take a certain number of bills, and leave them at every house in their allotted districts, after the Sunday Morning service.

However, the whole plan came to an end by poor G. H. having spent a restless night in suffering from a feverish cold and a bad sore throat. He was forbidden by Dr. Canney to preach out of doors and was only allowed to do what was absolutely necessary. G. H. was disappointed, but felt that it did not so very much signify, as no notice had been given, so of course nobody would know or go to the place appointed in his arrangements—by the little Market Place of the village of South Church.

But how *every* thing does become known! We have heard during this week, that a perfect crowd of people gathered at the place where the sermon was to have been preached, and expressed great disappointment and annoyance when they found no preaching. How they heard I don't know. Even at Middlesbro' the thing was known. For a young man who lives there now, but who used to be here, happened to be over here one day this week and told G. H. that his clergyman at Middlesbro' had told him of this preachment. It was unfortunate, but it could not be helped. None of the curates could have suddenly preached in that kind of way without a longer notice, and that kind of thing must be done well or it had better be left alone.

To the Rev. C. Green

Parsonage, Bp. Auckland: May 18, 1867.

The S.P.G. Meeting seems to have been glorious. The 'Guardian' report gives the same idea as your letter. The Bishop of Oxford's speech must have been grand. Thank God men are beginning to realise the work and mission of the Church, and, to whatever party in politics they belong, are willing to acknowledge her spiritual claims. God grant this new Association in our own Diocese may have His Blessing. What an opening it will give for men who have any belief of their own to tell it out in Gath. How it will spread—if only God give wisdom to those who have to manage the Association. Fancy four times a year an opportunity given for any man to speak out his whole mind on such subjects as 'Free Churches,' 'The way of promoting the cause of Missions,' &c. In time, even such strange truths as the spirituality and freedom of the Church

will be received and believed. As to the special subject of the Missionary Meeting, I received, after you left, a very touching appeal from S.P.G. It took great hold of me. I sent it on to Hick to see if we could not do something on a large scale. I have not had his answer, but I should like to get Lord Vane and some of those men to come to a big meeting and have some earnest speaking. I feel convinced that our own future as a Church depends upon the spirit in which we rise to our Missionary responsibilities. Tristram is coming on Thursday to speak for C.M.S. . . .

As to our own parish—all, I am thankful to say, is well. Some interesting cases—increasing average at early Communion—peace restored at Sandy Pond—are the chief causes for thankfulness.

Trotter has not yet been able to write his letter to the Bishop. I have now put the matter in Miss Caroline's hands, so that it will be done, as soon as he (W. D. T.) returns from burying an uncle (one of the Skenes) who has died at Harrogate.

For myself I am obliged to think of the vile body, which is not always an obedient servant ; but all your prayers have so been answered for me that I have never been more happy than I have been the last three weeks. If only this feeling lasts nothing can touch me. I feel :

1. That if we are to be made like our Lord we must have trial in some form, and that the only way of finding rest is to kneel quietly and take His yoke upon us and try to love it because it is His yoke.

2. That the blessings which we have in this parish are very great. The work is steadily advancing—souls are one by one awakened—our own people are deepening. We have Weekly Communion. We shall soon have, please God, at any rate a decent church in the town,[1] and the parish church is available for all the year.[2] We are spared the internal bickerings by which many parishes and many Brotherhoods of Clergy are embittered. Many work with us and we work happily together.

3. If we keep near to our Lord, He can and will point out the way when He wishes us to leave—He brought us here. No one can really hurt us. No one can touch a hair of the head without His permission, and He will only permit it so far as is needed to

[1] It had been determined to renovate and decorate the existing St. Ann's.

[2] Gas lighting had been introduced.

crucify self and raise us into closer union with His resurrection life.

So I try to rest quietly, to keep the body in good health so as not to become morbid, and to leave the future with Him. When I am not able to carry out these principles, I say, ' Wilkinson, you are an ass, and not fit to teach others.'

I feel worried sometimes about you all, lest it is injuring your future to keep you here, but I can only repeat what I have said before, that I trust you to tell me of any post which becomes vacant to which you are drawn. Though it would cost me much to say Good-bye, still I think I should spare no effort or influence which I could use to secure for you such a post, and so in some measure return the comfort and help which you have given me these many years.

As I write, the thought rises as to the unspeakable blessing of knowing that our Lord lives, that He is thinking of us and ordering each step. Oh may He draw us nearer to Him, and help us not merely to work for Him, but to trust Him, and to trust His love, and so to love Him as to be content to leave all with Him.

In June, Wilkinson went on a little round of visits—in London, where his brother was married; to Mr. Chapman, near Bury; and to his uncle, for the last time, at Oxted. For the moment, things looked more hopeful at Bishop Auckland.

To the Rev. C. Green

7 Seamore Place, Mayfair, W.: July 8, 1867.

I am glad to find from your note that there is a hope of the breach in time being healed. It could easily be done. The Bishop has only to write to Bowser and say that though he considers me to have acted wrongly, he is satisfied that there was (subjectively) no breach of faith, &c., &c., and I would gladly say that I can see how my conduct must have appeared from his point of view. This, however, must be left, I fear, at present. If an attempt were made in an injudicious manner to effect a reconciliation the breach would only be widened. Mrs. Baring must see that so long as her husband leaves his letter unrecalled, in which he stigmatises me as one who breaks his promise, openly insults his Bishop, &c., &c., &c., neither my wife nor I can presume to force ourselves upon them.

God knows that I would do anything for peace, but I do not see any step which I can suggest. Pray tell me anything which occurs to you.

I wish you would see Proud and give me a line by return to Hermitage, Hitchin, Herts. I ought to answer the Bishop's last, but I cannot do so till I hear whether the churchwardens agreed as to anything which I was to say for them.

I honestly expect nothing, but I should like to know. In haste, but

Ever, my dear Green,
Yours very affly.,
G. H. W.

Keep down all bitterness. It brings no peace to the soul, but it is awfully hard to be still and stay oneself upon God, but even the effort brings some happiness.

P.S.—I have received a letter from Proud, so need not trouble you on that head.

Stooks has gone into the whole matter with me and says that I was justified (as a matter of episcopal etiquette) in having that meeting of parishioners.

I know you do not seriously think of sending anything to the ' Guardian ' about the Bishop, which would be wrong.

CHAPTER V

ENDING OF THE AUCKLAND MINISTRY

On August 13, after working till 2 o'clock in the morning to clear off business, Wilkinson started for a holiday in Scotland with all his family. It was a time of great refreshment. He met or was joined by several old friends, Mr. Maclagan, Mr. Goschen, Mr. James Graham, Dr. Macleod, Mr. Stooks, Lady Grey, and others; but the great enjoyment was to be with his wife and children in the glorious air of the hills and moors of what was afterwards his own diocese.

To the Rev. T. Wilkinson

August 23, 1867: Pitlochry, Scotland.

One pleasure of a holiday is the time which it gives for letter writing. I am, however, losing some of this happiness at present as I have a lot of tiresome letters to write about curates. . . .

I had a very busy fortnight before I left, and felt much like a hunted hare when I got fairly into the railway carriage. However, my work was not in vain, as we gathered together nearly 700*l.* for the cleaning and repairing and re-seating of our church in the town of Bishop Auckland (the one opposite to our Parsonage). People gave very liberally and cheerfully, and I did not at all dislike what is often a disagreeable work of begging.

We are all very happy here. I wish you could pop in and see us. You can, however, imagine the way in which we spend our time, if you add 6 children to the respectable clergyman and his wife whom you saw at Oxted. Our day is divided much as it was there. All breakfast together.[1] We read and write till 1. All feed together—then an immense walk, not to Godstone for letters, but up the hills for heather. Then our dinner and the children's tea. Books and talk till 9.30. Then prayers and to bed.

[1] At home he always breakfasted by himself.

It is a quiet happy time and will, I trust, by God's goodness be a blessing to us in many ways. I am beginning to read many new pages in my children's characters, and not a few passages in my own life come out more clearly than they have ever done before, as I look back upon them from this quiet spot, and then try to make some good resolutions, at any rate for the days which may be yet to come.

I went over two or three times to O[swald] H[ouse] before I came away, and was pleased to find things in good order and the place looking pretty—grass nicely mown. Altogether it looked more bright and cheery than I have seen it since he went.

I preached a great deal while I was at home—one sermon I liked very much. The idea of it came into my mind one day as I was walking to Godstone, and I put it into shape at odd moments in my little den at East Hill. 'If any man will serve me, let him *Follow Me*.' . . .

Once I should have said that I was afraid that I had tired you with this long preachment, but I know that you like to hear what interests me, and this sermon interested me more than any which I have preached for a long time.

To the Rev. C. Green

Pitlochry: Aug. 17, 1867.

We made a long expedition yesterday through Killiecrankie past Blair Atholl up to the falls of Braemar. There we had our picnic—the four eldest children, Trotman, Mrs. Johnson and ourselves. Then we ascended a great hill and had a magnificent view—range after range of mountains—with grand jagged outlines—fine bold peaks—everything in fact which we could desire for the perfection of mountain scenery.

There is, I hear, a nice church here and weekly Communion—a pretty Parsonage and an amiable looking Pastor—with an energetic churchwarden, who has raised the funds, built the house, and has entire management of the finances. I saw him yesterday about a sitting, and found that all save one pew are let. This, which holds five, we have secured, and are to pay 5*l*. for it.

Looking back on our efforts for St. Ann's I feel full of thankfulness. The parish has certainly been raised to a higher platform by all the work and worry of the winter. They are beginning to give *well*. E.g., Curates Fund, St. Ann's reseating, &c.

God is blessing us, and if we continue to trust Him, He will help us to do a real work there—or—if it be His will—find us work elsewhere.

From Mrs. Wilkinson to Miss C. Trotter

Pitlochry, Scotland: August 21, 1867.

The only fault I find is that the days pass so dreadfully quickly. We breakfast at 8.30, all together, which we enjoy as a great treat, as we never can do so at home. It is a real delight to me to be able to pour out my husband's coffee and not to feel that one need hurry. No door bell ringing every 5 minutes. Indeed it has been unnecessary for anybody to ring the bell, for the front door stands open from 6 in the morning till 10 at night. . . .

The children are so happy, especially the three eldest. They think Scotland even more delightful than they imagined it would be, which is wonderful, for they had anticipated all kinds of enjoyment. One of the chief delights, after climbing mountains, is, when we come home too late for their 5 o'clock tea and we all have tea and dinner at the same table; they think it is dining late and that they are very grand. Then I think that the delight of all delights is having their Father to play with and walk with. Even your godchild appreciates it. Yesterday we took the six children in a wagonette; it was great fun, only we all got wet thro', and as I had no servants in the house, as they had not returned from Blair Atholl, it was rather hard work for M. J. and me to get them all dry and warm again.

To the Rev. T. Myers

Aug. 28, 1867: Pitlochry, Scotland.

As I look back, I feel that the weak point in the parish work as a whole has been in house to house visiting. I remember well the good which I effected, actually making a congregation at Kensington by simply taking the lists of one visitor after another and going round to every one, making notes of cases which seemed to require further visiting but gaining a personal knowledge of all in my district. We have, thank God, done much, but I fear that in this we have failed as a whole. I shall be glad to know what the result of your Friday talk on this head may be. . . .

The correspondence which has unexpectedly devolved upon

me and the difficult questions which my reading is suggesting have already altered the character of my holiday. God, who knows my future and who orders all, has His own wise reasons for this and it is not possible for me to be happier than I am, though not free from anxiety—

1. As to the parish.

2. As to the questions on which I must preach when, God willing, I return. The more I read, the more strong I become in distinctive Church teaching, and this will I know be unpopular, and flesh and blood shrinks from the utterance, but God helping me the people shall have my whole mind, if I am spared to return.

To the Rev. C. Green

Pitlochry, Scotland: Oct. 8, 1867.

I answer your note at once. Myers thought that the church [St. Ann's] would not be closed [for alterations] till after my return, so the subject was postponed.

1. We must engage the Town Hall for Sundays. The arrangement could be left in Proud's hands, who will manage it for us better than any one else. (Notice put in the papers, &c.)

2. The Wednesday evening service and any evening service for Saints Days (e.g. St. Luke's Day) can be held in the Barrington School at 8 o'clock.

3. The Friday morning and the morning service of any Saint's Day can be held in the parish church at 12 o'clock. We can then meet for our conference in the vestry of the parish church at ¼ before 10. Armitage must have a fire ready for us.

4. The Holy Communion must be administered *every* Sunday morning after morning service in the Parish Church and the sermons kept as short as possible. It will never do to deprive ourselves and the people of the opportunity of weekly Communion.

5. I think on the whole that it is better *not* to begin a Holy Communion on Saints' Days without explanation.

When St. Ann's is opened, it will be the natural time for a new start with St. Andrew's Day—a time for me to preach as to my views, system, &c., and then we can begin whatever it seems desirable to begin afresh.

If on any of these points you do not agree, there is time for another letter which I shall receive here on Thursday. . . .

I know that you and Proud will take care that the Bishop

does not alter or arrange anything which devolves on me as incumbent to alter or arrange. My interests are safe in your hands.

One special 'mercy' which he records, as such, during his stay at Pitlochry was a meeting with the Rev. T. T. Carter of Clewer. He had not made Mr. Carter's personal acquaintance before, but in 1865 he had heard him preach in London, and had paid a visit, which interested him deeply, to the wonderful series of institutions which were beginning to rise out of the prayers and labours of that holy man at Clewer, as well as to the House of Charity in Soho.[1] Mr. Carter's book on the 'Life of Sacrifice' had been one of the books which he fed upon with the greatest profit when he first went to Bishop Auckland, and just at this time he was studying his 'Doctrine of the Priesthood.' The two men of God were much drawn to each other, and as years went on Wilkinson's esteem for Mr. Carter increased more and more, and he would advise persons for whom he desired the highest spiritual culture to resort to Mr. Carter for confession and guidance. He wrote in his diary:

On Thursday [August] 29 I had a talk with Mr. Carter. He was very kind and sympathised with me. His advice was confirmatory of the conclusions at which I had arrived.

1. Nothing more important for ourselves and for our work than our personal sanctification, and this is furthered or ought to be furthered at Bishop Auckland.

2. Dangerous and destructive of our own comfort in after trials to have acted with self-willed choice.

3. To give my people the negative assurance that I am *not* a Romanist, *not* anything which is out of harmony with true English Churchmanship.

The entry shows that he had been thinking of resigning Bishop Auckland, though without any call, as yet, to go elsewhere.

He returned from this happy rest to Auckland on Thursday, October 17. On the Tuesday following came a letter from Mr. Kempe, the famous Rector of St. James's, Piccadilly, offering

[1] See above, p. 141.

him a small benefice in London. The cure itself was what people would call unimportant, but Mr. Kempe seems to have laid stress upon the openings which it might make for a wider work.

Tuesday, 22nd. Letter came. Much anxiety, but much help and proof of God's love. I must try—

1. To seek first God's Kingdom and Righteousness.
2. To think of souls of people. People here, people there.

Not my own comfort, influence, usefulness, but the work which will solemnly be given into my care. In thinking of work here and there this is to be my thought. All about Church Societies—Committees—S.P.G.—all this only secondary. The first thought is the parish—my parish.

It was a wearisome task to come to a decision. To accept Mr. Kempe's offer meant a sacrifice of 300*l.* a year; but the generous uncle at once promised to make up the difference. His stepmother, his sister, one or two of the curates, urged him to go. His doctor guaranteed that he would be perfectly well if he stayed, if he would only 'not worry,' and take more exercise. His kind friend Mr. Trotter (the younger) was really angry with him for thinking of going, and called it a 'desertion.' 'Which temptation is it?' he wrote in his diary, 'stones made bread, or casting self down from rock? . . . My judgment decided to go; my feeling wished to stay.'

To the Rev. C. Green

7, Seamore Place, Mayfair, London, W.: Oct. 31, 1867.

I am very busy—writing for curates for Bishop Auckland—seeing St. Peter's, &c., &c. I am much perplexed—all here so very tempting, but the feeling for Auckland increasing daily. I am going to-night to Enfield to see Maclagan.

God bless you all. What you have been to us and how I have felt the blessing of your friendship at this time I need not say.

I am very perplexed, but very happy. I feel that if I make a mistake in my decision God will still Bless me if I decide honestly. The difficulty is which is right.

To the Rev. T. Wilkinson

Parsonage, Bishop Auckland: Nov. 3 [1867].

I only add a line to say how much I hope that you will not be anxious about me. Whether I stay or go, there is so much that promises a useful, happy life in either place, that I am perfectly at ease, only waiting till I see my way more clearly, and sure that it will be made clear to me. I saw John Ward,[1] and everything on that score is straight without any difficulty. Mr. Kempe gives me as long as I wish for consideration. As I have said, I feel sure that I shall see my way clearly by degrees.

My chief anxiety now is to hear that you are better and that you are fairly started on your southward tour, which will, I hope and believe, send you back well, as we all long to see you. God bless you, my very dear Uncle. It is Sunday, so I will not write more.

To the same, from Mrs. Wilkinson

Bishop Auckland: Nov. 3rd [1867].

I don't feel cheery to-night either—in fact I feel very much the other way. The weather is hot, damp, dull and heavy, and we too have had our share of bothers this week. I have a headache and am *very* tired. I long to write a cheery letter, as you say it does you good, but I cannot think of a thing to say. Dear old G. H. is better, I trust; he has appeared stronger during the last three weeks. He really is taking care of himself as far as he can in so large a parish. Then there are, my dear Uncle, other things besides the parish that often worry and make him quite ill. I do not speak evil of dignitaries if I can help it. But a certain man who lives in a castle does, I imagine, sometimes, I may say often, with a vivid imagination, return to the sunny days at Limpsfield when, with a red handkerchief round his head, he hoed potatoes.[2] He still thinks he is hoeing potatoes, and deals with his unfortunate clergy as if they were the said potatoes. The Incumbent of Bishop Auckland he must consider a potato much rooted to his own ground, for the thumps he gives him thro' continual disagreeable and *overbearing* letters is somewhat unbearable. However, I really think G. H. is getting used to it, and it does not give him a bad night every time he receives one, as it used to do.

[1] The agent for the Durham property.

[2] Bishop Baring was formerly Rector of Limpsfield, which is near Oxted.

In the midst of the agitation of this choice came a telegram, bringing him news scarcely less grievous than the death of his father in the previous year. His affectionate and cherished uncle, Thomas Wilkinson, was dead, at Lyons. The telegram arrived at 11.25 on Friday, Nov. 8; at 12.55 Wilkinson was in the train on his way to the spot.

To the Rev. F. R. Chapman

Hotel Collet, Lyons: Nov. 10 [1867].

My dearest Chapman,—A great sorrow has come to us. The Uncle whom you knew is gone. He arrived at Lyons on Thursday, quite well—dined at Table d'Hôte, full of spirits—went happily to his bed, and never woke again. I got a telegram at Auckland on Friday that he was very ill, travelled straight, and got here this morning, and a wretched kind of Sunday it has been. I had no conception of the difficulties which such an event involves in France. You know what he was to me—how I owed Rome to him, and Palestine, and meeting my wife—nearly all the happiness of my life. He had just promised the 300*l.* a year which I should lose by going to London, and when the telegram arrived I had to decide in three hours whether to go to St. Peter's [Windmill Street], or remain—my feeling for remaining, my judgment for going. The telegram came when I had had a week of anxious days and disturbed nights, seeing my way clearer and clearer to go, and yet longing to stay. This has upset and may have stopped all the idea of going to London. I gave Kempe free leave to fill it up, and perhaps he has done so. If he has decided to wait, it will be some days before I can decide. I wish I had time to write fully, but it is not possible. 'East Hill, Oxted, Surrey' will, please God, be my direction on and after Wednesday.

God bless you all,

Ever yr. aff.

G. H. Wilkinson.

If I go to London, I am not to live in the district, but somewhere near Wimpole Street.

To the Rev. C. Green

Paris: Nov. 13, 1867.

I have but a moment to write as I am either travelling or occupied for my poor Aunt from morning to night. It

may be that all is practically settled, but so far as I know I still have to decide, which I must do, at latest, on Saturday.

I know nothing, except what my wife told me in letters posted on Sunday. I still *long* to remain as I did on Friday, but my judgment says what it did then. . . .

I have felt the Blessing of all your prayers, but I am worn and weary.

To the same

East Hill, Oxted: Nov. 22, 1867.

I am perfectly clear as to my duty. Thank God He has spared me a shadow of a doubt as to the fact of my decision being right, but I cannot tell how it has broken me down in body and spirit. However, it is done—I have seen Kempe and accepted it. He was very kind—spoke of the sacrifice which I was making, &c., said that the advice which Archdeacon Bland gave as to writing to the Bishop was most important—that it was clearly right to write to him—that when no word of reconciliation was found in the Bishop's reply it was absolutely important for the Church's sake that I should leave Auckland.

I have asked my sister to send you the copied part of my letter to Proud which will tell you the point in which I regarded it, tho' you already know it. On the one side a longing to stay—greater than I can express—but on the other side an intense conviction that I had not the right to refuse a work which I could do, to attempt to bear and to do that which was beyond my strength alike in body and in spirit—to stay because I wish to stay—possibly to do harm, to undo a good work and then to be idle and broken down for the rest of my ministerial life.

I have written long letters to Proud, Edgar, Trotter, &c., so I must ask you to tell all to Myers and to Cope.

I see how much evil may arise by my leaving, but we must pray God in mercy to avert it and spare us this trial. With that prayer, my dear Green, will be joined the prayer that He may so order *your* future that you may not suffer by your real friendship for me and the way in which during all these weeks you have put your own interest aside. May God Bless and reward you for it.

I have decided to make no arrangements of any kind about St. Peter's of a permanent nature, until I have seen you and

talked over all your own plans for the future. All words seem cold to tell you how we feel all that you have been to us, but you know what we feel without the need for words. . . .

When I am settled at the new work I know that I shall like it, but now the one thought which is ever present is the idea of what I am leaving and the utter shrinking from starting all fresh again.

God bless you all.

To the same

East Hill, Oxted : Nov. 25,5 p.m., 1867.

Yes—I have not a doubt about the wisdom of my choice, but I would, before I decided, have made any sacrifice to have ensured my staying in Auckland with the confidence that I was doing God's will by remaining. My feeling in this respect is unaltered. If my people grieve, I grieve with them—how deeply, they will believe. But I know the evil and pain of *going*—I do not know the evil which might have resulted if I had not listened to the voice of Him who has guided me from my youth up until now. I should have been robbed of half my strength, if I had stayed in face of the strong conviction that He was calling me away.

You know how *we* feel with *you*—but God will make this too clear, if we wait upon Him.

His grief in deciding to leave Bishop Auckland was indeed sincere and deep, besides his pain at the cause of it.

In spite of much trial and bodily weakness there, writes Mrs. Tyrwhitt-Drake, Mr. William Trotter's elder daughter, I believe our beloved Primus would have told you, as he often told me, that no time of his life was happier, or so happy, as those Auckland days. Mrs. Wilkinson was at her best there, and there was absolute content in the work for God, and happy home life.

In reference to the differences with the Bishop, she writes, Mr. Wilkinson's wonderful self-restraint, and holiness in every word and act, could scarcely be told; but to me, who knew him better than my own brothers for 44 years, it seems as if there was no epoch in his life when his marvellous personal holiness shone forth more triumphantly.

Never once, says Mr. Green, did he seem to deviate by a hair's-breadth from the line of most straightforward action,

nor can any of us recall a single angry or disrespectful word uttered by him in regard to the Bishop's conduct, even when most provocative. Again and again at our weekly meeting would he pray for grace to remember the duty we owed to our Father in God, and repeatedly did he insist on the necessity of keeping a check on both thoughts and speech. No doubt it was needful, for we curates were not all as saintly as our Vicar. At certain turns in the controversy the more excitable members of the staff came dangerously near the point of boiling over, and to one such occasion a note of remonstrance addressed to myself must clearly refer.

To the Rev. C. Green

There is a point which has occurred to me this morning of which I have thought much.

There seems a danger lest in our natural feelings about our own plans as regards St. Ann's being thrown over, we should judge hardly or speak disrespectfully, or at any rate not think as we ought to think of him who is set over us in the Lord. It is a great trial, but our duty is clear, namely to feel that he of whom I speak is obliged to think of the future as well as the present and to act to the best of his judgment. He may be right and we may be wrong, or *vice versa*, but we must all be very careful lest Satan take occasion to tempt us. Our Lord will help us if we keep near to Him ; we must pray more and glorify Him by trusting where we cannot see. There is, I feel sure, great blessing yet in store for us.

What a mercy that we are so united in spirit that we work so happily. How many mercies do we enjoy. Let us trust and hope that all will be right and that He will help us in His own good time to feel that all is right.

Personally, Mr. Green says, I had no grudge whatever against the Bishop. He was always most kind even when dissatisfied as to my teaching regarding baptismal grace, gave me my first living, and at the banquet following the consecration of our new Church spoke of me and my preaching in very laudatory terms. But it is only the honest truth to say that, notwithstanding some most excellent qualities, he gave cause enough for the colloquial liberties taken with his name, such as ' over-Baring ' and ' past-Baring.' Going no further than what happened at Auckland under my own eyes, I feel perfectly sure that any

impartial person, knowing all the circumstances, would admit that Mr. Wilkinson's position was for two or three years a most difficult and trying one, yet through no grave fault of his own. Among his letters to myself is one in which, referring to Mr. Mitton, his successor, he says, 'His position is very difficult. He comes (to Auckland) as I came, determined to work heart and soul with the Bishop. Each talk he has with the Bishop probably shows him that he must either abandon some plan of his own, or have a "row."'

How much suffering all this prolonged misunderstanding and estrangement meant to one so loyal as a churchman and so naturally sensitive, and what it cost him to leave a parish that had twined itself round his very heart, and to be driven away in disgrace, as it seemed, from his native county, can never be fully told. His letters written at the time, as well as long afterwards, are painful to read. Never shall I forget one morning in St. Ann's Chapel when, standing in the stall opposite to say the Psalms for the day, I chanced to look across, and saw the big tears welling up and stealing down his cheeks. It was at the words: 'Thou calledst upon me in troubles, and I delivered thee, and heard thee what time as the storm fell upon thee. I proved thee also at the waters of strife.' *What time as the storm fell upon thee* is in my mind as inseparably associated with thoughts of Wilkinson as the common motto, 'Strangers and pilgrims,' which we took away with us from Seaham Harbour.

Watching his later career, when he became confessedly one of the most striking personalities in our Church, and impressed by the testimonies borne on all hands to his great saintliness, I found myself inclined to think that the peculiar sorrows and afflictions through which he had gone might account to a very large extent for the standing and influence he had secured. When I began, however, to recall the past over which lapse of time had thrown a thickening haze, and especially as letter after letter came to be read, many utterly forgotten, and all unlooked at for some 30 or more years, the conviction deepened that, whatever might have been the effect of suffering and rigid self-discipline, there was the germ and type of everything at Seaham and Auckland which anyone who knew Wilkinson in after days as Vicar of St. Peter's, Eaton Square, or Bishop and Primus, would specify as characteristic features.

All the obituary notices which appeared at the time of

Wilkinson's sudden death make mention of the extraordinary spiritual influence which he exercised whether as parish priest or Bishop. Was that first discovered after he had gone south ? We who worked with him during those early years in Durham knew it well, and could supply other instances than those which have found their way into the public prints. 'Several years ago,' says the Rev. S. Davison of Deaf Hill Vicarage, 'after addressing the sailors in the Seaman's Institute at Bilbao, an elderly engineer asked about the late Primus. He had been a pupil-teacher in the school at Seaham Harbour while Mr. Wilkinson was vicar there. He told me with considerable emotion that, though an old man, he would gladly walk 20 miles to hear him preach, and would willingly suffer the loss of a little finger to shake hands with him once more ; ' and that, remember, after an interval of at least 40 years.

Arthur Robinson, in his admirable little book on 'The Personal Life of the Clergy,' insists on the wonderful effect of character, which he illustrates by reference to a schoolmaster whom he encountered while taking a Mission in a pit village in the county of Durham. The schoolmaster seemed a hard-headed, and, at first sight, a hard-hearted creature, but the bare mention of a former vicar of the parish was enough to thrill him with emotion, and he would say, 'Ah, you had only to shake hands with him, and you felt that he was full of the Holy Ghost.' The allusion here was unquestionably to Wilkinson. Robinson and I both took part in the Auckland Mission of 1886. He was at Black Boy Colliery, where he would meet our old schoolmaster, Underwood, who with his wife came very directly under Wilkinson's personal magnetic influence.

But the same line of remark might be pursued as to all the leading characteristics of Wilkinson's pastoral and parochial work. The aims and methods of the two first incumbencies were identical with those at St. Peter's, Eaton Square. It was not there that he first learnt the secret of dealing with individual souls, of gathering around him a band of trained and earnest lay workers, of infusing into every undertaking a spirit of prayerful reliance on Divine help, or the duty and privilege of responding to the claims of Foreign Missions. All these things we, his old colleagues, had known from the beginning.

And so with his preaching. The morning sermons were generally read. They were written *currente calamo*, as far as I had the chance of observing, and would be pronounced good

and thoughtful, especially a course on the Apocalypse ; but had they stood alone, I question whether his pulpit power would ever have been much felt or talked about. It was at night, when he spoke ' without book ' and straight from the heart, that ' virtue went out of him ' to attract, impress, convert. The sum and substance of what he said might be plain and familiar enough, the old Gospel message or some manifest duty of daily life ; but that which appealed irresistibly to the pitmen in the North was just what told in like manner upon his fashionable hearers in London. In both cases the secret of success was the same—*the man himself*, the sense of his intense reality, of his personal and deep conviction, his agonising desire to win souls for Christ. Sometimes, especially when suffering from overstrain of work, his voice would become peculiarly shrill and piercing. He seemed literally to cry over the people for refusing to accept God's unspeakable gift. The whole soul of the preacher was, as it were, revealed and laid open to us, so full of tender love and pity that high and low were alike conscious of a power more than human—a constraint upon the heart and will coming direct from God's Spirit. No man was more intolerant than Wilkinson of any rhetorical arts or graces. The management of his voice admitted of much improvement. Yet, after all, such peculiarities of delivery were so expressive of his unique personality, and got so closely linked with touching memories, that no regular attendant on his ministry could wish them away.

The one real and substantial change I can discover in the Wilkinson I worked with in Durham and as he was known during all the later years of his life was in regard to Church views. It is perhaps true that from the very first he would have been ready to let anyone apply to him the classification Bishop Samuel Wilberforce is said to have adopted as applicable to his own case : ' A High Churchman on an Evangelical basis.' But both at Seaham and Auckland the ' basis ' was more in evidence than the superstructure. What the biographer will have to show is that while the first remained unshaken to the very end, the latter underwent what almost amounted to a reconstruction.

This change came about very gradually, and may, I am disposed to think, be attributable to two main influences—(1) new friendships and associations of a more definitely Church type ; and (2) the careful study of books written by men of what would be called the ' Catholic School.'

1. I had myself got acquainted with Mr. Postlethwaite of Coatham before going to Seaham, and thus formed a link of communication between him and my Vicar. At Coatham it was that in after days Wilkinson met both Body and Bodington. During our time at Auckland we used to get Sunday help from Ashwell, then head of the Training College at Durham and Editor of the 'Literary Churchman.' After both men had moved to the South, Ashwell becoming Canon of Chichester and Principal of the Clergy College there, they became still closer friends the latter taking courses of sermons at St. Peter's, Eaton Square and being specially consulted (I have always understood) by Wilkinson in the preparation of his remarkable manifestoes on 'Confession' and 'Absolution.'

2. As far as my memory serves me, the first writer having any touch with the Oxford Movement who laid hold on Wilkinson was Goulburn. This was about the end of our time at Seaham. Writing to me in November 1863, he says, 'Many thanks for the extract from Goulburn, which I return. I intensely enjoy all his writings and feed upon his "Thoughts on Personal Religion." . . . The passage which you quote exactly expresses what I hold to be the truth. My trouble in life arises from finding that, to speak in general terms, one half of the clergy act as if the trammels of habituation would in themselves form right principles, while the other seem to forget that they *do* serve to consolidate such principles when formed.'

But the most potent influence without any doubt were the writings of Canon Carter, and among these in particular 'Priesthood in the Church of England,' to which I remember calling his attention, if I did not actually lend him my copy. It is probable also that he became acquainted with the works of Archdeacon Robert Wilberforce, especially that on 'The Incarnation.'

After quoting the letter from Pitlochry, given above, in which Wilkinson expressed his intention of preaching a more distinctive doctrine on his return, Mr. Green continues :

It was because I felt so strongly what would be the certain effect of such a change in Wilkinson's preaching as the above quotation portends that I threw all my influence into the scale in favour of resignation, though it brought me into sharp collision

for a time with some of his warmest supporters in the Parish, like the Trotters, who did not know or realise as much as myself through what a process of reconstruction their Vicar's views as to Church and Sacraments had been passing.

The following account of Wilkinson's ministry at Auckland will be read with interest. It is written by Mr. Matthias Hammond, formerly headmaster of the Barrington School, next door to the Parsonage, a man well known and much respected in the town.

He never visited a house without kneeling down with the family and asking God's blessing upon them before he left. On a Sunday morning at the early celebration, long after the congregation had left, he might be seen kneeling at the Holy Table. While in the midst of his work at Auckland there came a *call* to take charge of the parish of St. Peter's, Windmill Street, London. He asked for the prayers of his people, and on a certain night in November he walked down to the Parish Church, shut himself in, and spent an hour communing with God that he might be guided aright. That night the decision was made—he would leave those he loved, and who loved him so dearly, and go to the work for which he believed God had called him in London.

All our townspeople recognised in him a man of great personal holiness. He credited his people with the highest motives, and himself was influenced only by such motives. Even the children recognised this in him. An amusing incident happened in our Barrington Sunday School one afternoon. In one class a teacher had for his lesson—Heaven and Hell. He told the latter side of the story first, then the brighter. 'Now,' he said, 'who'll go to heaven?' A little fellow promptly put up his hand, with the answer—'Mr. Wilkinson, sir.'

A man writing from Australia lately says: 'I am sorry to hear of Bishop Wilkinson's death, but he could never have wished for a *better* death—to die in harness at his post, doing his duty. No man could wish for better, could he? When I was a very little boy and saw Bishop Wilkinson first, I was so impressed with his face that I wondered if he were Jesus Christ come to earth again.'

He was a man of unbounded sympathy with the weak, the fallen, the sick and sorrowing ones. How many hundreds of

sad houses have been comforted by his sympathy and prayers when he visited them. Bishop Auckland is in the centre of a great colliery population. On Saturday evening the principal streets are almost impassable, and the public-houses are crowded with people from the surrounding villages as well as from the town itself. Sometimes one of our men would be over-tempted and join the crowd of drinkers at the inn. Presently some brother would inform the Vicar, when the two would enter the inn, find the man, and tell him they had called to take him for a walk. With the Vicar and the lay-brother on either side the man would soon be seen far away from his late temptation.

We had in one of the yards off Newgate Street, a little old woman who carried a pack on her shoulders and earned her living by hawking her wares amongst the neighbouring villagers. She was 'Old Mary,' a half negress, very aged and much bent with the weight of her pack. One day she was returning home when she spied Mr. Wilkinson on the other side of the street. At the same moment he saw her, and the two rushed across the street to meet each other. He held her hand and, of course, hoped she had had a good day in the country. After a little talk he apologised for keeping her talking while her burden was on her back, but the dear old woman had quite forgotten the weight of her pack.

Mr. Wilkinson had travelled in Palestine, and had seen how the aged were reverenced in many parts of the East. He himself had great respect for old people and never lost an opportunity of showing it. At St. Andrew, Auckland, where our parish church is situated, there was an old farmer between seventy and eighty years of age, who might be seen any day riding about the parish on an ass. The Vicar met him one day and had a long talk with the old man, and accompanied him part of his way home. All the time the two were together Mr. Wilkinson was bare-headed—his hat in his hand.

CHAPTER VI

REMOVAL TO LONDON

Wilkinson took leave of his northern parish at the beginning of the year 1868. His last sermon was preached in St. Ann's Church on the evening of Sunday, January 26. His text was, 'Jesus of Nazareth passeth by.' He prefaced the sermon with a few words about the parting.

On what subject should he speak? says the report in a local paper. Should he speak of himself, and thereby waste the precious moments upon which the eternal destiny of many might be hanging? God forbid. For any good done by his instrumentality in the parish, he gave thanks to God. The sins and negligences of the past had been confessed and, he hoped and believed, forgiven. Anything still undiscovered God would reveal. He wished to say to the large congregation he saw before him that if anything could have lessened the sorrow he felt on leaving them, it was the knowledge he had of him who was appointed his successor. He could scarcely think of one more suitable. He had spent five days with him, and found it impossible to talk with him without feeling him to be a man of prayer and one who felt the responsibility of his work. He asked all who cared for him to strengthen the hands of the new pastor.

He then went on to preach one of his characteristic mission sermons. The last Communicants' Meeting was held on the following Tuesday.

On Friday, February 7, a great meeting was held in the Town Hall, at which presentations were made, and speeches delivered. The District Visitors and Sunday School Teachers presented a separate address, in which, after speaking of the way in which Wilkinson had 'originated and successfully directed a plan of

lay visiting,' and of the development of the Sunday Schools under his care, the teachers went on to say :

> Those of us who are thus engaged would specially observe that any success which has attended our efforts, and not a little of the happiness derived from them, we attribute under God to the teaching and help you have given us in our fortnightly meetings, and to the invaluable lessons you have there imparted for the instruction of the children committed to our charge.

Wilkinson in his reply touched on various personal matters, and paid a tribute not less generous than just to his assistant clergy, and then proceeded to say how much he wished the feeling of parochial unity to be developed, not only on the spiritual side, but on the temporal side also. When he first came to Auckland, he said, he had not thought enough of this side ; he had been so anxious to bring souls to Christ that he had ' neglected parochial work.' Since then he had endeavoured to remedy the defect. He had a growing conviction of the great strength they had here in having one clearly defined parish. This was unknown in many parts of London—in the part to which he was going. In a family brothers and sisters differed, without being divided ; he wished it to be so in the parish, Conservatives and Radicals, old and young, rich and poor, people differing from each other in religion—all working together for the improvement of the place in matters of sanitation and other things, that they might leave the parish better than they found it. He ended with a fervent appeal for steadfastness and faithfulness to Christ in the great battle in which all were engaged.

He wrote in his Diary a few days after :

> It is a new epoch in my life. I feel so strange. I am ignorant. I have not the power which London needs. . . . I need trust. I hang upon others, their opinion, their esteem. Easily uplifted, easily depressed. And all this so unworthy of one who has been redeemed, baptised, ordained.
>
> God was very good this week and arranging all for me.

Helping me to see so many people and giving me B. back, and H., and M., all in that fortnight, and making me so happy all the week in Bondgate [the Trotters' house], and so cheerful and thankful. Then strengthening me on the Friday evening so mercifully, and all the arrangements of the evening so good—and then forgiving me on Friday night.

The following letters will show how he looked back upon those whom he left.

To the Rev. C. Green

Oswald House: Jan. 31, 1868. Friday Night.

I fear Sunday will be very trying for you. My thoughts are much with you. Endeavour to believe that God is *really* raising the people to a higher level—that, so far from slackening, they have made up their mind to do everything more earnestly than ever. The more *you* believe this, the happier you will be and the more you will help the people to carry out their resolve.

My last morning had some more cheering signs of the way in which God the Holy Ghost is working in the parish. It was almost equal to Mission Week. How good God has been to us! The trials seem as nothing compared with our Blessings.

To Miss Trotter

7 Seamore Place, Mayfair, W.: Feb. 15, 1868.

My dear Tottie,—My wife sends her warm love and begs me to say that she objects to your speaking of 'not taking up my time with a longer letter,' because you know that we care for every little bit of news about the dear old parish. . . . We laughed about Carrie's handing over the one stupid girl by way of encouragement to her new fellow teacher. . . . We think of her so often. So much happens to remind us of that Sunday in London when we all stood on the edge of a precipice, though we knew it not—your Father—my Father—my Uncle—and then this break. How merciful is the order of His Providence, who hides the future from us, giving us day by day, for the day, the daily strength; but forbidding us to gather the manna for the morrow.

I am very thankful that God is showing you the light in which to regard all this trial. It is what I have been lately taught

myself, that I must work *now* for Him, and not for the pleasure of the work. Few can have any idea of the intense happiness which some parts of my Auckland work used to give me, and it is well that after a while we should only work for love to our Lord and, when we cannot feel love, from the consciousness of our duty to our King, remembering His blessed assurance that if we love Him we keep His commandments, and so hoping that He will accept our obedience even when the commandments are kept by a heart which is only too conscious of its own coldness and want of affection to its Saviour. . . .

I quite sympathise with you about the Bishop. I had hoped that it was crushed in myself, but I was grieved to find how quickly it rose up again the other day. But the line is clear. So far as I can see, he has done a grievous wrong to Christ's Church. . . . Nothing could excuse what he has done as Chief Pastor of Christ's Flock. At the same time it is our duty to believe that from his own point of view he acts rightly. He thinks it is his first duty to maintain his authority, &c. Giving him all credit for motives, &c., I feel as in God's sight that he has acted wrongly, but I feel equally sure, aye far more sure, that without God's permission he could not have so acted. . . . [By such a train of thought] sometimes there comes deep peace and a warm kindly feeling for the human instrument who has injured me. . . .

I am sending two books for you and Carrie for Lent. I do not put your names in them, as I do not know whether you have them. I find Williams [1] useful in this way. If you read a page, or at most two pages, very quietly with prayer, his thoughts suggest other thoughts, and many a holy meditation comes to be grouped around the Cross. Carter is admirable.[2] If you come to doubtful prayers about Holy Communion, put them aside for the present. Please God in a few months I shall put into shape the result of my thoughts and reading in Scotland on this subject, and will send you the manuscript. Meanwhile do not harass yourself with its many difficulties, but rest on the old happy truth that There our Lord meets us—aye enters into our heart to feed and strengthen us—dwells in us and we in Him—is one with us. I shall be glad to hear what is your

[1] Isaac Williams's *Devotional Commentary on the Passion.*

[2] See above, p. 188, 198.

decision about weekly Communion, how far you are rested by the afternoon quiet. There are times when all is cold and dreary—we cannot feel or love. It is then that I need the blessing of Holy Communion, of having only to receive—to open my heart that my weakness, my nothingness, may receive His strength : that to me—just as I am—*He* comes.

We know we have your prayers. The reaction which I dreaded came at last, but it is well that it should come now before the new work begins. It is hard to bear—very.

We have been quite alone—see no one but each other and workpeople and one or two relations whom Car saw for a few moments. The blessing of our Lord be on you both.

Ever yours sincerely,

G. H. Wilkinson.

To the Rev. C. Green

7 Seamore Place, Mayfair, W., London : Feb. 24, 1868.

I do so feel for you. I know so exactly how all this will press upon you. The only comfort is that if we stay ourselves upon our God and just cling in agony and darkness to Him with the cry ' If it be possible, take it away ; if not, Thy will be done ; ' He is pledged to carry us in some way through the trial or to deliver us from it. How in every case in which we have suffered we have been able *afterwards* (not at the time but afterwards) to look back and say Amen—Even so, Father—Thou hast done all things well. While the trial lasts we can often not even pray—can only say ' God be merciful.' But He sits as the refiner of silver and we know not what plan He is carrying out, what is the object of this which seems to us so mysterious a dealing.

As regards the present I should advise most strongly :

1. That you allow yourself to speak and explain as little as possible. Once or twice you will have to speak, but avoid going it over and over more than is absolutely necessary.

2. Take care, if possible, that the matter is kept out of the newspapers.

3. Keep before your mind that it is most important that no prejudice against Mitton should be raised in the minds of the people. This would be to pull down with our own hands the house which we have built.

To the same

7 Seamore Place, Mayfair, W., London: Feb. 25, 1868.

I am miserable about it all. Though, for your own sake, I rejoice that you are spared the trial of remaining,[1] I bitterly feel for the people. Altogether it is very mysterious, very trying to our faith, and yet I feel sure that if we trust—go on trusting even in the dark—we shall ere long see the meaning of all our Father's dealings. 'Have Faith in God' has been ringing in my ears morning, noon and night, and I have needed the teaching, for I have been in such full sympathy with you all that your burden has been mine. . . . I am altogether very sorry—and yet, as I have said, I feel so sure that there is a golden thread running through the tangled web and I am much more able than I was yesterday to trust our Father.

As to your own position it is perfectly clear. I should advise you to write a short note to Mitton similar to the draft which I enclose. I should then set myself by prayer and deed to quiet the people, to put Mitton's side before them, so that you may be able to leave the parish in the same sad but quiet spirit of trustful resignation which God had wrought in them before this new trial was laid on them. If we believe that whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, now He is drawing our little flock near to His very side; now He is weaning them from man to feed them in His own green pastures. Oh may He help us all by prayer and faith to keep Satan out till this trial be over.

To the same

7 Seamore Place, Mayfair, London, W.: 28 Feb. 1868.

What I have suffered *He* only knows. The wounds of the last year are not yet healed. God knows if they ever will be in this life, so you will understand that I only have written the above because I know the help it is to have the other side put clearly before one at such a time.

Your position for this month is most trying. . . . Do not spend the precious hours in which so much good can be done in more discussion on the subject. It will require much self-restraint, but you will so rejoice hereafter if you can look back and feel that amidst so much provocation you have been able to carry out the teaching of the Quinquagesima Gospel, that at

[1] There had been some idea of Mr. Green's staying on to work under Mr. Mitton, but the plan had fallen through.

the cost of much personal pain you have been able to leave Christ's flock ready to welcome their new Pastor as coming from *Him*.

To the same

7 Seamore Place: Feb. 13, 1868.

Thank God it is only now and then that I realise what has happened. When it is realised, it is very very hard to bear, but God in His mercy helps me day by day, and I only seem to be, as in olden time, spending a part of my holiday in London, not really one of its clergy. The worst will be when I am fairly in the new work and feel how different it is from what I have left. All new—fresh faces—fresh hearts—all fresh. My wife says there comes over her spirit sometimes an intense desire to have one of Maugham or Armitage's hearty shakes of the hand. That expresses what I lack, and shall for long lack, in the new parish.

To the same

East Hill, Oxted: March 9, 1868.

I shall need all God's help, and all the prayers of my people, in the new work. It is quite as hard, and the air quite as heavy, and the amount to be done quite as much, as I anticipated. . . . The fact is, my dear Green, that I have had a hard hand to hand fight for the last two weeks. May God grant that the discipline may not have been in vain, but it has taken a good deal of *go* out of me, and makes my correspondence not very lively, so we will pass on to the next subject.

Mrs. Wilkinson to Miss Trotter

46 Devonshire Street, Portland Place, W.:
[July 10, 1868].

My dearest Tottie,—. . . Armitage and Howe are in such a state of delight, thankfulness and excitement. On Monday night they were met at the station by Peachey,[1] who conducted them to his house, where Mrs. Peachey had prepared a hot supper for them; after which they were taken to Peachey's prayer meeting, which he held that evening in the vestry as a sort of honour to them, I suppose. Then at 8 o'clock next morning Nichols was sent to fetch them from their lodgings in High Street (at the bottom of this street) and he conducted them up here. . . .

[1] Scripture reader at St. Peter's, Windmill Street.

After their breakfast they had certainly a warm welcome from us *all*, and then we had prayers. The poor old men both broke down then. After prayers Howe said to me, 'Oh, Mamme, it wor like a shower o' hail on us to hear the master say "Our Father" again.' . . .

Many years afterwards, on January 7, 1897, Wilkinson wrote to Mr. Green from Auckland Castle, where he was staying with Bishop Westcott:

You will think of me on Friday, when I have to give an address about the Mission—our old Mission of 1865—in St. Ann's, and on Sunday evening, when I have once more to preach in the old parish church, please God. It is always a strange and solemn time to me when I come to this parish. It will be wonderful if, please God, one is kept near Him to the end, to see exactly how much that heavy trouble with Bishop Baring was my own fault, how far a trial from without. What a Blessing it is that alike over our good and our evil that Precious Blood has been sprinkled.

CHAPTER VII

ST. PETER'S, WINDMILL STREET

THE new charge to which he was admitted was the Perpetual Curacy of St. Peter's, Great Windmill Street, near Piccadilly Circus. The church had not long been built. Its erection was mainly due to the liberality of Edward Geoffry, the famous Earl of Derby. Great Windmill Street opens out of Coventry Street, just opposite the top of the Haymarket. The neighbourhood has been a good deal altered since Wilkinson's time by the formation of Shaftesbury Avenue, which cuts through a part of it; but the district still contains glaring contrasts between gay amusement on the one hand and degradation and misery on the other. There are theatres in all directions; the door of the church opens directly upon the Pavilion Theatre. In one respect a great improvement has taken place. Next door to the church in those days stood the notorious Argyll Rooms, in the full swing of their evil prosperity as the nightly resort of profligacy and vice. This scandal to public morality no longer exists. What made Mr. Kempe think of offering Wilkinson the living is now forgotten; but Mr. Kempe had known him in the Kensington days, and they had common friends in Mr. Stooks, Mr. Maclagan, and others, who were acquainted with the unhappy state of things in which he was working at Bishop Auckland. Doubtless those who were familiar with him felt that no man was more competent to deal with a district requiring special powers of evangelisation.

While the house which he had taken was being prepared for him, Wilkinson and his wife were lodged in Lady Grey's house, Lady Grey being absent at the time at Cannes.

To the Hon. Lady Grey

7 Seamore Place, London: March 4 [1868].

DEAREST A. G.,—Many thanks for your kind letters. It was so good of you to write, when you have so much to try your eyes—drawing, writing letters, &c. Car is rather knocked up with all her work, but a few days' rest will, I hope, put her right. We want, if possible, to run down to Oxted from Friday night till Tuesday, as I told my people that I should not begin regular work till the 15th. I read myself in on Sunday last. I have two curates there at present, both temporary, as Mr. Cope is to come in April, and my plan is to give a title to some young man for the Trinity ordination. One highly recommended, a 15th Wrangler, has been to see me to-day, and promises well. . . .

I hardly know what to say about the church and district. I have seen so little of it. As you know, it was no hasty decision to come, so I feel quite sure that it will all work well. I have never had a doubt, since I decided, that I decided wisely, but, as you can imagine, this is rather an unsettled time. I have been the last two days hard at work with my predecessor, going over accounts, &c. The district seems mainly supported (i.e. the schools and charities) by the clergyman begging perpetually of all the people in St. James's parish who have any money to give. This will take up a certain amount of time and involve some anxiety. On the other hand the parish is compact—can, I think, be well worked with two curates; those who have been attached to the church are warm and hearty. The way has been well prepared for me by my predecessor. Mr. Stooks and Maclagan also preached there, and then addressed the communicants in the vestry last Christmas, and told them all about me, so they are prepared to co-operate heartily. The service is a curious mixture, some things high, some very low—black gown, for instance, and an offertory without the prayer for the Church Militant and other curious combinations. It is really a beautiful church, and one to which we shall, I think, soon become very much attached.

I did not preach last Sunday, as I wanted to see the sort of people before I spoke to them. Our house is now getting well forward, and we hope to be in next Tuesday. I cannot thank you enough, dear A. G., for your kindness in letting us stay here so long. It has been a great comfort. It would have been

wretched work in a stuffy lodging, whereas here we have been thoroughly comfortable. . . .

46 Devonshire Street, Portland Place, is our direction. Remember me very kindly to the Rolfes and kind Mrs. Woolfield. I often think of her, bringing the jelly to me after my sermon. . . . My Auckland people sent me the balance of the testimonial fund the other day. The total was 123*l*. It will be such a pleasure to me, when, please God, you return to England, to show you all my new books, &c. I know how much interest you will feel in it all. As I look back upon the last ten years, and think how much of my happiness is owing to you, dear A. G., I only wish that I could do anything to show you how much I feel all the many many kindnesses which you have shown me. May God ever bless you, and day by day draw you nearer and nearer to Himself. . . .

Wilkinson brought with him from Bishop Auckland his valued coadjutor, the Rev. C. H. Cope, a son of the well-known artist, A. S. Cope the elder, and brother to the present eminent portrait-painter. He was soon joined by the Rev. C. H. E. Wyche, who was related to his former curate, Mr. Myers. He retained the services of a lay-reader and his wife, and a lady visitor (Miss Grimes) who had worked under the former vicar. A connexion of his Auckland friends, the Trotters, Mr. J. Crowdy of Trinity College, Cambridge, helped him in the Sunday School. For some time he and a young woman, who sold bonnets in the Burlington Arcade, were the only teachers.

The Vicar began, says one who remembers those days, a shortened evensong on Wednesday evenings for the poor. After prayers he came down into the nave and gave a simple teaching, walking up and down the church and speaking almost individually to them. The numbers rapidly increased. The poor people said they could come in their working clothes, and they could understand him. He spent much time in visiting among his people. . . . The church soon became packed with the better-class people in the parish, and work increased ; more visitors were needed. The Vicar's prayerful spirit, and firm faith in the answer to prayer, is seen in the following incident. A lady and her husband, both earnest church-workers and seeking London work, were drawn to his church. They offered

their voluntary services, and introduced to him two other friends, also desirous of work. He told them they were a direct answer to the prayer of his wife and himself. Other communicants came forward and offered as district visitors; and so the work grew.

Though Wilkinson felt quite clear as to his acceptance of Mr. Kempe's offer, says Mr. Green, yet it cannot be denied that the new work was one from which he had every reason naturally to shrink. I can well remember the evident feeling of disgust with which Mrs. Wilkinson told me of their visit to London to see the kind of district connected with St. Peter's, and how they took a carriage to drive through street after street, all more or less suggestive of unsavoury associations—lawless foreigners and houses of ill-fame.

From Mrs. Johnson (the children's Governess), to the Rev. T. Myers

46 Devonshire Street, Portland Place, London, W.:
March 31, 1868.

We are very 'elegant' here and have aristocratic visitors whose tall footmen almost thunder the door down—and our drawing-room is charmingly pretty—and there is 5 o'clock tea, scented and drunk out of dainty cups—and we never have 'unwashed people in the hall'—or dirty men anxious about their souls in the study—or teachers' meetings making the dining-room stuffy, or district visitors in the drawing-room with dirty boots and damp cloaks, or unhealthy looking women who may have had fever or small pox or anything, waiting for wine or a word with 'the Master' or——but I must not go on in this strain—only I cannot tell you how my heart yearns at times after the little dingy Parsonage with all its associations. That dear old study, what a haven and refuge it was for the poor, the sorrowful, the anxious, the suffering, the weary and heavy laden! What loving sympathy and tender interest ever met them there! It is all so different here.

The church is pretty, but the service—dreary—dreary. I never saw a more hopeless looking congregation so far as my experience goes.

Wilkinson could not be content to feel himself a stranger among the people committed to him. Soon after his arrival

in London he sent this circular letter to every family in the parish :

To the Parishioners of St. Peter's, Great Windmill Street

My dear Friends,—It is often said that in London it is not possible for the Clergyman and his people to be united by the same close ties as those which bind them to each other in a Country Parish.

I hope that this is not a true statement. Much of the happiness of my work in two large parishes has arisen from the warm sympathy which existed between my Parishioners and myself, and I shall be very sorry if, in course of time, we who belong to St. Peter's are not linked together by a similar bond of kindly feeling. As the first step towards forming this friendship I send you this letter. I wish earnestly to invite you all to come to Church. It is for you, especially, that St. Peter's has been built, and unless we meet within its walls, no real union is likely to be formed between us.

I also hope that you will let us know if, at any time, either through sickness, or any other cause, you would like to have a visit from any of the Clergy ; for, although we hope soon to see you all in your homes, it is not possible for us at once to make the acquaintance of all our people.

Any message sent to Mr. Peachey, 40a Rupert Street, will be delivered to us without delay.

Earnestly praying that God may bless our work amongst you,

I am, My dear Parishioners,
Your Friend and Pastor,
George Howard Wilkinson, M.A.

In spite of every possible discouragement, Mr. Wilkinson began at once, Mr. Green says, to work out the very same problem in this most difficult London parish that he had with such signal success confronted among the sailors and colliers of the North. Here, as at Auckland, he put to the proof such agencies as house to house visiting, social gatherings (I was myself present at a very successful tea-meeting where he made an amusing speech in the old familiar style), outdoor preaching, and a parochial mission.

Here are some of the vicar's notes of parochial incidents and cases :

July 1868. A Sunday School Teacher, dressmaker, had got money which she did not expect to have been paid. Gave a third to God.

The two girls, W. The little room like a cupboard. A coffin. Their Mother's fear that they would be alone. Their toil to give her all she needed and save her from the workhouse. Now all over.

E. M. went to church. [Sermon] about denying : ' I have denied.' Could not sing ' Abide with me.' Was asked by clergyman about Holy Communion. Felt God would not have put it into His servant's heart to say those words unless He intended to give her the needed help. She at last became communicant. So touching—' Are you not often tired ? ' ' Yes, so tired ; I think it will soon be over, and then rest.' So young, so worn out.

Little girl went out of her own accord and begged and begged [for the Church] till she got 6*s.* 11*d.*

S. has 6 children—two daughters, both married and husbands out of work. All came on him. So hard up, he gave up Church.

Old T. and his wife. Shoemaker. The brown arm with the swelled veins—the white nightcap, the wide forehead, the long, upturned nose ; the beard and the moustache grey and cut with scissors. . . . ' Yes, according to the theory of Christianity I have neglected ; but I understand the theory to be that in myself I am utterly guilty, but that I may and must depend on the merits of the Lord Jesus.'

D. Man with cap on, baths in Argyll Street ; one daughter with French laundress, cleaning up all Sunday—another at work till 11 on Sunday. The roars of laughter as I went out.

S. C., a Mission case, had taken a place in Jew's family after being out of place for some time. Gave it up, because no Sunday to go to Church.

Mrs. H., Mission case, gave up selling papers on Sunday.

One anecdote of his work at this St. Peter's Wilkinson related in the last sermon which he preached as Vicar of the other in Eaton Square, as follows :

One Derby Day, when one in high position had brought disgrace upon his order by deeds of wickedness, when the minds

of the masses were very much aggravated against the upper classes in England, I went into one of the streets of my parish of Great Windmill Street. I found a man (shoemaker) who had imbibed 'American' ideas. (I am not disparaging that great country; I mean the ideas which are unhappily tolerated too much in America.) The poor man was suffering from a violent attack of rheumatism; every time that he tried to make that pair of boots, agony went through his whole body. He went out for a breath of air. Everywhere he saw men who ought to have known better, and women—whom may God's Church soon rise up to save!—going out for what they called 'a day's pleasure.' I found the man cursing God and man. *Why* are those people going out, with the Devil's smile on their faces, flaunting their shame? *Why* has that man who has just disgraced his order and others—*why* have they been born with everything, while I have nothing?' It took me an hour, before the man was like a calm rational being.

The next Sunday a barrister came to me. He said: 'I am very busy; and I am not good enough to talk religion; but you said in your sermon that you want help. Give me something to do.' I gave him, amongst others, this man. I said: 'Treat him as if he were a human being.' I advised him to adopt a course exactly opposed to that which had alienated another man, a painter, whom I knew. That painter told a friend of mine that although for thirty years he had done work for the same firm, with an unbroken character, no gentleman had ever spoken to him a single word, except to give an order! 'How can you expect me,' he said, 'to care much for *gentlemen*?' I advised my friend to do exactly the opposite. He carried out my instructions to the letter. He looked in, spoke a kind word, left him a newspaper. Once in the autumn, when he was sending up game to his own friends, he sent a brace of birds to my friend the shoemaker.

In six months the man's wife came to me, and said 'I think you may do *anything* with him now; that gentleman has so softened him.' The hand had been laid upon him, by a man who wanted to be of use, though afraid of being a hypocrite. He died at last quite unexpectedly, in the night; but, thank God, he had long been a regular communicant, and I believe a real Christian.

It was in the summer of 1868 that Wilkinson began street preaching in London, in the same way as he had preached out of

doors at Bishop Auckland. A placard was posted up, which said:

My dear Friends

It makes me very sad to see so many living round our Church who never enter its doors. I cannot bear to think that so many souls, for whom I shall have to answer to God, never hear the message of their Father's love. Therefore I intend, please God, to go and speak to you in your own streets. I hope to preach at the top of Rupert Street at Three o'clock this afternoon. Come and hear, Old and Young, Rich and Poor. I invite all.

Your friend and pastor,

George Howard Wilkinson.

Another time he wrote:

My dear Friends,—I cannot tell you how anxious I am that more of you should come to Church.

I often wish that I had strength to go from room to room and beseech every one to think more of that soul which must live for ever—that soul for which God's Son shed His precious Blood. I know how many trials you have to bear—how tired you feel on the Sunday morning—how hard you must find it to make a beginning, and go to Church!

Will you treat me as a friend, and let me help you?

I hope, please God, to go through the Streets next Sunday, at Half-past Five, inviting all whom I see to listen to the message of their Father's love. Will you come and hear that message?

I shall speak in the Schoolroom, 40A Rupert Street, at a Quarter before Six.

Do come if you can.

Believe me your sincere Friend and Pastor,

George Howard Wilkinson.

The workers met in the vestry for prayer, put on their surplices and went up the streets singing 'Lo, He comes with clouds descending.' At the top of Rupert Street they halted, and the vicar preached.

Mrs. Johnson gives the following graphic account of the first street preaching attempted, which, she says

was very successful on the whole. Mr. Wilkinson in surplice and hood, supported by his curates and followed by choir and

churchwardens, walked in procession from the church singing hymns. Such a spectacle seemed so odd in those squalid London streets. Arrived at the place chosen for the sermon, or rather address, as I should call it, we were glad to see a good many of the class we wanted gathered together, besides some of the better people who attend the church. Mr. W. preached with great power. It was a tremendous exertion, but his voice was distinctly heard to the very edge of the crowd. He told them that he had given up much in leaving the North to come among them, and how he longed for their souls, picturing to them the life so many of them had been living, and their sore need of a Saviour. A good many listened most attentively, and accepted his invitation to follow him into church for some prayer. It was indeed such a singular scene—the tall houses with hideous-looking women hanging out of every window, dirty men with short pipes in their mouths, the tawdry-fine work-girl, the jaunty shop boy, the city arab, the fat, prosperous-looking landlady in silk and velvet, a man selling apples and ginger beer, with a soldier or two, and rising up in the midst Mr. Wilkinson's refined, thoughtful face and pure white surplice.

He heard afterwards that at Orange Chapel the remark was made, 'I hear you have got a Puseyite at the church.' 'Why?' The answer was, 'He goes through the street, singing hymns.' The curates also preached, often under great discouragement, in the various mews and yards of the district, and endeavoured to draw such congregations as they could collect, into the church, to hear at least a part of the vicar's sermon there.

St. Peter's was attended during the season by a good many people who liked to escape from the more fashionable churches of the West End. Lord Derby was frequently there; and still more frequently his great political antagonist, Mr. Gladstone. A tablet is now to be seen in the south aisle of the church, which gives an extract from a letter of Archbishop Tait's, in which the Archbishop mentions that going one Sunday morning to St. Peter's he found Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone enjoying, like himself, the quiet of the unpretending little sanctuary.

It was very remarkable, writes Mr. Green, how soon Mr. Wilkinson began to attract general attention beyond the boundaries of the parish. I had a striking proof of this while staying

with him over a Sunday about 3 months after his institution at St. Peter's. Not a word had been said to awaken the expectation of anything unusual. All I knew was that the collection was to be for a special object in which my friend was much interested. But as soon as I had taken my seat in church I became conscious that a conspicuous figure in the central aisle was that of Mr. Gladstone, who had wandered up here from Carlton House Terrace. But the next moment the vestry door opened for the entry of the clergy, and to my surprise I saw the Bishop of London (Dr. Tait) following Mr. W. I ascertained afterwards that his lordship's presence was as much a surprise to the incumbent as to myself. The explanation seemed to be this. That morning some engagement of the Bishop's had fallen through, and Mrs. Tait suggested that they should take the opportunity of hearing Mr. Wilkinson, of whose power and success rumours had already reached the Palace at Fulham. When W. then reached the vestry it was to find the Bishop's manservant there with the episcopal robes and a message that their owner was on his way to the church, and would be ready to take some part in the morning service. But if the unexpected presence of these two notable men made that occasion memorable, its interest was not a little enhanced by the sermon preached to us, the subject of which had been suggested by the thrilling news just received of the capture of Magdala, and with it the complete accomplishment of every object for which our gallant troops, under the command of Sir Robert Napier, had made their way for hundreds of miles from the coast through waterless plains and over mountain heights 10,000 feet above the sea-level to King Theodore's stronghold in the depths of Abyssinia. Here Mr. Wilkinson found the ground of a most effective appeal to the liberality of his people. It was the 4th Sunday after Easter, when the 1st Lesson of the morning's service sounded in our ears that inspiriting eulogy pronounced by Moses concerning the people he had led out of the Egyptian house of bondage. 'What nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon Him for?' Seizing upon these words as his text, Mr. Wilkinson proceeded to indicate the parallel between England and Israel as regards the enjoyment of Divine favour and protection. We boast of our greatness as a nation, but to whose power and goodness were we to ascribe it but to that God who had been as surely and as much con-

cerned with our national history as ever Jehovah was with that of the Jews in ancient times. And were we not to recognise His hand in the great victory which, coming far more quickly than any of us had dared to expect, had thrilled the country with delight? And then, after dilating in a few picturesque sentences on the special difficulties and risks which an expedition such as this to Magdala involved, the preacher begged his hearers to consider how much more costly it would have proved if any serious misadventure had occurred, or if the campaign had taken the length of time that many military experts predicted. Had, therefore, the cause of charity and religion no claim on the amount of money, *reckonable to a £ or two*, thus saved? This flight of rhetoric was evidently too much for an old Chancellor of the Exchequer. I observed that Mr. Gladstone, clasping his hands behind his neck, leaned back just as he might have done in the House of Commons when surprised or amused by some extravagant statement of an honorable member. No words could have said more distinctly, 'Oh my innocent friend in the pulpit, if you had had but a tithe of my experience in dealing with the finances of the country, you would have known that war expenditure does not admit of any such easy and precise calculation!'

It surely adds still further to the interest of this occasion to know that at the close of the service the Bishop and the statesman, between whom there had been some estrangement, met to shake hands and resume friendly relations.

Mrs. Gladstone afterwards told Wilkinson her impressions of the first sermon that she heard him preach in Windmill Street. She said to her husband on coming out of church, 'How ill he looks! we must ask him to Hawarden.' To Hawarden in the autumn of that year he went.

To the Rev. T. Myers

9 St. George's Crescent, Llandudno:
Oct. 15, 1868.

I had a couple of days at the Gladstones. Very interesting. Lord Napier of Magdala also was there, which added to the interest of the visit. Gladstone is quite charming at home. So warm and earnest in the way in which he looks at everything. Though I fear he is all wrong in his public policy, it was a com-

fort to see the whole tone of his private life, the daily service in the parish church at half past 8 every morning attended by the whole family—the hearty response, &c. All cheering and full of interest.

From Mrs. Wilkinson to Miss C. Trotter

9 St. George's Crescent, Llandudno, North Wales:
Oct. 16th, 1868.

My dearest Carrie,—All the time that I was so ill I could only get down to Windmill Street now and then on Sunday. On the whole things have been going on satisfactorily. The evening meetings were much better attended. The congregations increased until people went out of town. A few more of the *parishioners* came, and the services grew more hearty. Jasper More turned out a trump, so did your favourite grave gentleman that you took such a fancy to. Miss Grimes still continues to have much to say in the vestry, indeed her private communications seem to grow longer each week. The curate that I think my husband had engaged when you were staying with us, became very ill and had to leave—poor man, his lungs were very delicate and a foreign climate ordered. G. H. has now engaged Mr. Myers' cousin that was once at Auckland (Mr. Wyche), and he is to come to him as soon as possible. Mr. Cope continues to work hard—and is looking rather better. The poor little thing [Mrs. Cope] is quite an invalid. The Doctor won't allow her to do anything in the parish. She is often in bed for days—it is very sad. They are now gone to live at Kensington with his father (since the mother's death). It will perhaps be better for her, as she will have his sister to take care of her. He will be even more than ever in the district, for an omnibus will take him there in a few minutes every day, and on Sundays he intends *taking* his dinner and spending the whole day in the district.

Well, to go back to our doings.

You know that when wee May was three weeks old we left London for Enfield. Mr. Maclagan was kindness itself, and allowed me to do just as if I was at home, so that the change of air did me great good, while I had no fatigue. Georgy[1] will, however, have told you all this. From Enfield we went to Bury St. Edmunds, to stay with the Chapmans. (You remember him, don't you? he came in when you were at breakfast in

[1] One of Mrs. Wilkinson's sisters.

Devonshire Street one morning.) We had *such* a jolly visit there. We did enjoy it so very much. We talked and chaffed and laughed, we drove and walked and sketched together, and then they allowed G. H. and me to go out alone now and then, and did not mind what we did in the way of making ourselves at home. We were very happy, and I especially felt in great spirits, as my strength had returned and I felt as if out of a horrid prison, so free and light and happy I cannot express to you how full of joy I felt. Mrs. Chapman, who draws very well, made a chalk drawing of me. G. H. is delighted with it (it is given to him) and thinks it very like, but I think it far too pretty—however, you shall have a photograph of it when the man sends them, and you can judge for yourselves.

From Bury we went to the Hotel at Cambridge for three days in order to lionise. The afternoon we arrived the weather was lovely, so we both walked about to get a general idea of Cambridge. I had firmly made up my mind to hate Cambridge, and to think nothing about it particularly worth seeing, and I rejoice to say it is not half so beautiful as Oxford. . . .

From Cambridge we went to Audley, to stay with Mr. Wilbraham, and had a very pleasant little visit. His church is beautiful, and all his people seem so fond of him. He is just like a father to his parishioners. He has been there 24 years, and has known so many of his people since they were little babies. From Audley I went into Cheshire, to stay with his brother, Frank Wilbraham, and his wife—they are very charming people, and I enjoyed my visit much. But George was not there. You know the Gladstones go to his church, and he and Mrs. Gladstone have had some parish business together, and in the course of their correspondence she asked him to go and stay with them at Hawarden Castle. I never happen to have met her even, nor did she know anything about me. He enjoyed his visit much, as I believe he told Tottie. Lord and Lady Napier of Magdala were there among many others ; G. H. liked him very much. Curiously enough, Mr. Wilbraham also was staying there. Was not that odd ? as G. H. went from his house too. The three Miss Gladstones are very nice girls. His two sons also were there ; one is just going to be ordained and to be curate to that Mr. Gregory of Lambeth, who once came to Auckland for S.P.G.

At Chester last Thursday week G. H. and I met, and immediately came on here, and remained at the Hotel that night.

Such a sad thing happened. A very nice-looking young fellow came to the Hotel at the same time that we did, and waited to be shown his room until we had chosen ours. When we got up next morning, we heard that he had been found dead in his bed. Was it not sad ?

That day we went out as soon as we could to look for lodgings, and I must confess I felt anxious to get away from the Hotel as quickly as I could. We are in such a charming lodging. You should persuade Mrs. Trotter to come here next summer. . . .

It is disappointing that this cold has come on, but the mere fact of having G. H. here all to myself (we don't know one person even to speak to, I am glad to say) is too delightful. I should be happy in a prison under the circumstances. We are together the whole day. We breakfast at half past 8. Then we read together; then we write our letters. Then we go out marketing together, which is such fun. Then we take a walk or a drive, as the case may be, and eat our luncheon at 1. Then we are out all the afternoon. Sometimes we climb to the top of a mountain, and sit in all the peaceful solitude of the mountain top, with the panorama of mountain, rock, and sea stretching out before us, and have a nice quiet talk.

I am George's 'whole parish' just now, and I get all the advice and lectures that would under other circumstances go to at least a dozen parishioners; so I hope I shall be much improved when I get back. But seriously it is a great comfort and blessing to have him to talk to as much as I like.

The work at St. Peter's continued to be greatly blessed.

To the Rev. T. Myers

46 Devonshire Street: April 3, 1869.

I am very thankful to have such a cheery letter from you. It is a great blessing. I was sure God would answer your prayers, but it is a great comfort to feel that at the opening of your church you have to thank Him for one of His greatest mercies. Send me your opening paper when it is printed. . . .

We are much cheered, thank God, in our work—that is, the real work is prospering. I have not made much effort about the morning, but the church has been filled at night, people raised up to help, souls awakened, &c.

During Lent I gathered the communicants into the vestry

after church every Sunday night to pray for the Lenten Blessing to be shed abroad upon us all, and certainly the prayers were answered, both for ourselves and for our Confirmation candidates. Holy Week I had Holy Communion every morning at 8, Litany and address at night. Good Friday afternoon I first taught the people how to meditate, then had (after Litany and a hymn) : Address, 15 minutes ; Silence for Meditation, 5 minutes ; Hymn ; Address, 10 minutes ; Silence, 10 minutes ; Hymn ; Address ; Silence ; Hymn.

It was very solemn, and I hope helpful. It is becoming anxious work. Souls beginning to be earnest, all that made Auckland anxious at last given in answer to all your prayers.

I shall have Holy Communion on the morning of your Consecration,[1] being a Saint's Day, so if I do not write, you will feel that you have my prayers.

The air here is clearer than in Auckland—our little Easter decorations, &c., not making a row. Some one outside of the parish told my wife we were becoming high, and she must go, and to her surprise my wife advised her by all means to go, told her the blessing of London was that she had so many churches from which to choose, &c., &c. On the other hand, there was a side in dear old Auckland which can never be exactly replaced.

God Bless you, my dear Myers. Be often in His presence and draw in His strength.

Wilkinson made a great point of his Confirmations, here as elsewhere, endeavouring to make them a real turning point in the lives of the candidates.

Why do you wish to be confirmed ? he asked on a printed paper.

Is it 1st—Because your companions or neighbours are going to be confirmed ?

Is it 2nd—Because your parents or friends wish you to be confirmed ?

Is it 3rd—Because you think that it will look strange not to be confirmed, when you have been attending a Confirmation Class ?

If you have no better reasons than these, you do not rightly understand what the Church means by Confirmation, and I must tell you kindly, but very decidedly, that it will only do you

[1] *I.e.*, the consecration of his new church.

harm to be confirmed *at present.* I hope, therefore, that no one will now be so mistaken as to press it upon you.

Is it, on the other hand, because you have turned to God with all your heart, and wish to obey the command of our Church by being confirmed, and so confessing before all men that you have chosen the service of the Lord Jesus Christ ?

Is this your Real Reason ?

In order that you may make no mistake, ask yourself these questions :

1. Have I made up my mind that, by God's Help, I will live a decidedly religious life, and will give up every bad habit ?

2. Am I ready that this should be known at once to all my friends and neighbours ?

3. Have I determined to give up all bad companions, and any worldly amusements which I think are likely to lead me into sin ?

4. Am I sorry for my past sins, and have I prayed to God to forgive me, trusting to what Jesus Christ has done and suffered for me ?

5. Have I made up my mind to go regularly to the Lord's Supper ?

If you are not quite sure what you ought to do, ask your clergyman and he will help you, so far as he is able ; although you must remember that he is not able to look into your heart.

That God's blessing may rest upon you, and that the Holy Spirit may guide each one of you to give up your whole heart to the Saviour who died for you, is the prayer of your Friend and Pastor,

GEORGE HOWARD WILKINSON.

Further proof, Mr. Green says, of the rapid progress Wilkinson made at Great Windmill Street will be found in the following extract from a letter of the same lady who described the open-air preaching scene. ' You will be glad to hear that Mr. Wilkinson has had an anonymous gift of a very handsome alms-dish for the Church, also some money towards the cleaning, besides several 5*l.* notes for the schools. He preached a sermon asking help for the latter, and the day's offertory brought about 40*l.* Mr. Jasper More, the M.P., is a staunch supporter, and came to a meeting at which he made a speech that had a tremendous effect on the wardens and others, repeating things that had been said by the Gladstones of Mr. Wilkinson, and how he had met a

fellow in Piccadilly, and brought him to the Church, and how the said fellow had declared he would go to no other Church for the future, &c., &c.'

To the Rev. T. Myers

46 Devonshire Street: 1869.

My dear Myers,—I hope you have arrived safely and that God's mercy in answering our prayers has given you new strength to wait upon the Lord to tarry His leisure—to feel sure that in His own time and in His own way He will answer your prayers and prosper your work. Throw yourself *heartily* upon your people. Try to get two or three round to read the Bible and pray—ask for strength to feel settled amongst them. Take them as they are. Do not expect too much. When you have a chance of meeting any one like Green or Palmer or Hoyton have prayer with them and you will go back strengthened.

All of us have our trials, or else the old nature would never be crushed or the ideal of our Lord reproduced in us, and in order to effect this result the trials must be trials which *we* feel as trials, not those which others would feel as trials. You have a lonely work up there, but try to live day by day, drawing the daily strength from the living Head and realising your part in the body, realising the link which binds you to the great Church dispersed throughout the world. Remember that it is always a pleasure to see you, and that I am as Ever Yours Affect.

G. H. W.

To the Rev. C. Green

46 Devonshire Street: May 13, 1869.

. . . May our God grant you all Whitsuntide blessing for your own soul and your work. If only He would give us the confidence of the first disciples in the Ascended Lord, how calm and peaceful our life would be. As we realised His presence and His love, we should be *satisfied*. Self would die, and the care for the opinion of others would die, and all the wretched self-assertion, and thinking of self, and talking of self, would die, and our life would be indeed hid with God, as His was who bore all without a word of self-assertion, triumphing without referring to His triumphs, suffering without complaining of His sufferings, misunderstood and yet never striving nor crying nor allowing His voice to be heard, saving others, not Himself.

To the same

Aug. 11, 1869.

Thank God, we are getting hold of some of these poor souls, and having some very interesting work.

I hope your business difficulties do not try you so much as they did. It is intensely interesting to me to hear of you and dear Myers both settling down as centres of life and light in the Diocese for which I care and pray so earnestly. May our Lord grant to us all such help of the loving Spirit, that this week's teaching may be increasingly realised by us, so that being emptied of self and rising above all the petty thoughts by which our higher life is crushed, our spiritual power diminished, our very influence with others weakened, we may be so completely pervaded by the All Mighty Spirit as to run in the way of His commandments, to do His will on earth as it is done in heaven, brightly, cheerfully, promptly, feeling absolutely nothing, and yet able to do and bear all things through Him whose blood has redeemed us, and whose Spirit is in us.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TWELVE DAYS' MISSION

THE year 1869 saw a considerable development of Mission work both in Wilkinson's own parish and elsewhere. During his first year in London he had taken part in a Mission at Enfield of the same kind as that which was held at Bishop Auckland. The parish in which it took place was that which Mr. Maclagan served. He helped there again in the same way in 1869. In January 1869 Wilkinson went to Willenhall, where Mr. Bodington was vicar, to join in a similar Mission. With him were associated Mr. Twigg of Wednesbury, Mr. Herbert of St. Peter's, Vauxhall, Mr. Lowder of St. Andrew's, Wolverhampton, and Mr. Body, then at Christ Church in the same town. Willenhall was chiefly inhabited by a population of miners, locksmiths, and iron-workers. Wilkinson only preached twice, and took part in the prayer meetings after the sermons, but he made and received a deep impression. After the first of these sermons, which was on Ahab (a favourite subject of his), he found himself guided to a man at the bottom of the church. Wilkinson told him to pray. 'But,' the man answered, 'I never prayed in my life, and I do not know how to do it.' 'Then kneel down,' he said, 'and tell God that you do not know how to pray, and ask Him to show you how.' The man did so, and before long Wilkinson had to come back from dealing with some other souls and ask him to restrain himself, as the man was confessing all his sins in a loud voice and in deadly earnest. Another convert of that sermon was a 'backsliding' woman, who before the next night had found peace. 'I went home,' she told him on the second evening, 'and made up my mind not to eat or drink till I found the Lord again.'

He was deeply moved by the simplicity and apostolic poverty in which Mr. Bodington was living in a cottage among the people ; and he felt a great joy in seeing and thanking the good people who, during the Mission at Auckland, had helped him by their prayers. Some had at that time come over from Sutton Coldfield night after night to pray in Mr. Bodington's kitchen.

At the time of the Willenhall Mission, says Miss Bodington, he came one day to my father's house at Sutton Coldfield, where there was an aged lady, who had lived a long life of prayer and retirement, and was longing to be released. She said 'Mr. Wilkinson, will you pray that God will soon take me home to Himself ?' 'No,' he replied, 'I will pray that you may be willing to wait God's time.' From that day she never again asked to be released, but that she might be willing to wait; and she died in great peace at 95 years of age.

On July 21, 1868, a little conference on Missions was held at Wilkinson's house. It was attended by Mr. Maclagan, Mr. Moore, and Mr. Malcolmson of Deptford, together with Wilkinson and Mr. Cope. It was stated that besides Willenhall, Enfield, and Bishop Auckland, Missions had been held at Dukinfield, Ratcliffe, and Vauxhall. Discussion fell under four heads: (1) Previous Preparation ; (2) Kind of Services, and Rules for Clergy ; (3) On the After-meetings ; (4) On the Edification of the Converted.

Under the first of these heads it was laid down that :

1. The work of a Mission Week is to 'rivet previous teaching,' not to be a substitute for it.

2. The interest of Communicants in other Parishes to be awakened in the success of the proposed work, with a view to secure their sympathy and prayers.

3. The aid of all Church-helpers in the Parish visited to be secured and *carefully* organised *beforehand*.

4. Encourage in ourselves and in our helpers confidence in the Holy Spirit's sure help, and to work in trustful recollection of this.

5. The Clergy as much as possible to live 'in retreat' and by rule during the week.

6. If Clergy have a Mission Week at all, not to be ashamed

of it, to go thoroughly into it and carry it out as completely as possible (no half measures).

The main success of the work was felt to depend upon the After-meetings.

Two ways of conducting these were mentioned :

1. As at Willenhall, where clergy and some laymen, during the singing or prayer, dispersed themselves through the room and addressed each individual as to religious condition, such inquiry often leading to a separate prayer being offered up aloud with, or by, the individual addressed.

Objections felt to this mode :

(α) Noise and confusion—liable to hinder the calm work of the Holy Spirit and produce excitement likely to be injurious.
(β) Individuals requiring help might be passed over.

Suggested as an improvement on this plan that the individual work be *alternated* with the general prayers, instead of being contemporary with it.

2. A second mode, practised at Bishop Auckland, was received with greater favour, in which the inquiry of individuals was always made in private :
(α) The anxious being got together by themselves in the Schoolroom.
(β) Impressions on these was deepened by Incumbent or other Clergy—but
(γ) One Clergyman only dealt with each soul requiring guidance, in private, and a first meeting for this purpose was all that was arranged for at the public meeting.

But, however the Schoolroom meeting be conducted, the following suggestions were felt to be always applicable :

Assuming that all gathered together in the Schoolroom are more or less interested in Personal Religion (and some of them deeply so), use the following cautions :

1. Some of them may be at peace ; be careful not to unsettle them.
2. As the Holy Spirit works in divers ways, sometimes suddenly (or apparently so to us), sometimes more leisurely,

guard against so insisting upon peace then and there to be secured as to go beyond the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Then, again, cautions of an opposite kind are needed :

3. Forgetting the living power of the Evil Spirit, and the need there is of firm, strong appeals to awaken those that are in his power.

4. Forgetting the natural evil of the heart, which will secretly hold to some hidden sin, or be even ignorant of its hold.

Under the last head of discussion it was observed :

1. Souls are not to be neglected after Conversion.

2. Neither are they to be made dependent upon the priest, but their union with Jesus through the Spirit, in the humble use of the means of grace, to be kindly cherished.

3. The remembrance of past sin to be encouraged, not to disturb the soul's peace, but as a constant ground of humiliation.[1]

In a note to Mr. Moore explaining Caution 4 above, Wilkinson wrote that it was important

so to bear in mind the natural evil of the heart as not to leave an awakened soul to itself, till the Holy Spirit has either guided it to peace or in some degree settled it. Many of the Clergy, he added, awaken a soul (by God's help), and perhaps speak once or twice to it in private, and then leave it. I think this is very dangerous, and ignores the power and malice of the Devil.

A conference on a larger scale was held on Sept. 23, 1869, at Cowley, by invitation of Father Benson. Besides Father Benson himself, Wilkinson notes that Fathers Prescott, Grafton, and O'Neill were present, and Messrs. Rivington, Randall, Smith, Bodington, Body, Moore, Herbert, Furse, Parnell. Mr. Mackonochie of St. Alban's and Mr. Lowder of St. Peter's, London Docks, were also there.

No one who was present at it, says Mr. Bodington, can ever forget it. The earnestness of the speakers, the ability with which

[1] For this information I am indebted to the Rev. J. H. Moore.

they set forth their views, the charity which was in them all, the spirit of unity after having all received the Holy Communion together in the early morning, the sense of responsibility with which one after another addressed the conference, conveyed to all who were there the conviction that the Holy Ghost was with them, to guide and teach them.

The subjects chosen for consideration were drawn out with great elaboration, as a result of suggestions previously sent in. They were as follows :

1. Preparation for Mission :
   (*a*) Union of Parishes.
   (*b*) Invitations to Prayer.
   (*c*) Lay Agency.
2. Conduct of Clergy during the Mission :
   (*a*) How to secure gravity of demeanour.
   (*b*) Retirement for devotion.
3. Services :
   (*a*) Hours of Service.
   (*b*) Forms of Service.
4. Preaching :
   (*a*) Indoors and out of doors.
   (*b*) Sermons for men.
   (*c*) Modes of attracting the careless.
   (*d*) Conversion of sinners.
   (*e*) Leading souls to God.
   (*f*) Enforcement of dogma.
   (*g*) Arrangement of subjects.
   (*h*) Meditations after Sermons.
   (*i*) Bible Classes and other religious exercises, for men, women and children.
5. Dealing with individual souls :
   (*a*) In the presence of others.
   (*b*) Privately after the meeting.
6. Confession :
   (*a*) How to bring people to it.
   (*b*) How to prepare them for it.
   (*c*) Desirability of it.
   (*d*) Penances.
7. Length of Mission :
   Whether to end on Sunday or on a week day.

8. Perpetuating results :
   (*a*) Prayers. Pictures.
   (*b*) Subsequent visits of the Mission Priests.
   (*c*) Parochial arrangements for turning Mission to good account.
9. How to deal with Children. Preparation for Confirmation.[1]

Undoubtedly one result of this conference was the Twelve Days' Mission which took place in London the same autumn. Later Missions have been prepared for at greater length, and it may seem surprising that the first London Mission, which took place in November, was only decided upon after Michaelmas ; but it was assuredly undertaken in no light-minded manner. From St. Luke's Day, when it was 'settled,' as he records in his notebook, Wilkinson had no leisure for anything else. 'Incessantly occupied with Mission work,' he writes. He had not only to prepare his own parish, but to give advice and help in other parishes which were joining in the movement. 'At Herbert's, afternoon.' 'Busy with Mission and preparation for it. Letters about it. Mr. Duncan from Mr. Burrows [of Christ Church, Albany Street].' 'Morning at All Saints' with circular for Mission.' Such are the entries in his diary.

A paper was sent round to the clergy of the larger London, with the approval of the Bishops of London, Winchester, and Rochester, and signed by Mr. Gregory, Canon of St. Paul's, Mr. Maclagan, Vicar of St. Mary's, Newington, Mr. Upton Richards, of All Saints', Margaret Street, Mr. Cosby White, of St. Barnabas, Pimlico, by Wilkinson and some others, inviting co-operation.

It is generally felt, they said, that the present time is a very critical one for the Church of England—may we not say, for the whole of Christendom ?—and that the spread of irreligion and indifference threatens our land with great danger. Especially

[1] My thanks are due to Mr. Bodington for this information. The only note that I have of Mr. Wilkinson's part in the conference is characteristic. Mr. Moore recalls his observation that 'the Will must be got in the first instance. Dogmatic teaching given in ordinary parish work, but the object of a Mission is to *gain the Will*.'

in this vast metropolis, in which so many souls are committed to our charge, there is a stronghold of carelessness and ungodliness which is beyond the reach of our ordinary ministrations.

The strictness of the account, therefore, which we shall have one day to give to God for those who have been bought with the Blood of Christ, and who are committed to the care of the Ministers of His Church, obliges us to consider anxiously whether we may not, by some unusual effort, reach some of those who are still the sheep of His Flock, though they have wandered away from their Shepherd.

Knowing the power of union, we have agreed to join together in making a special attack upon sin and Satan, by devoting 12 days preceding the season of Advent. . . . to earnest prayer and preaching for the conversion of sinners. . . .

No uniformity of method in the different Churches will be attempted. Each Parish Priest must judge of the needs and capabilities of his own people, and arrange his services accordingly. Our union consists in our making simultaneously this special supplication to God and appeal to man, and in our remembering in prayer, not only each one his own needs, but also each one the needs of his brethren. We venture to recommend, however, that, wherever the circumstances may be favourable, there should be, if possible, a frequent, if not daily, Celebration of the Eucharist; and that the Course of Sermons might, in some instances, be advantageously preached, not by different Preachers, but by the same Preacher throughout.

The signatories offered to find preachers for those who desired it. Mr. O'Neill, then at All Saints', Margaret Street, afterwards of Cowley, acted as secretary for the movement.

About 120 churches are said to have joined in the Mission. Friday, November 12, was observed as a day of preparation for it at St. Barnabas', Pimlico. Addresses were given by Father Benson, Mr. O'Neill, Father Grafton (now Bishop of Fond du Lac); by Mr. Herbert, Mr. Maclagan, and Wilkinson himself.

Before the Mission, the following paper was distributed among the communicants of St. Peter's, to enlist their intercessions:

A number of London Clergy have agreed to join together in making a special attack upon Sin and Satan, by devoting twelve

days preceding the season of Advent (Nov. 14–25) to earnest prayer and preaching for the conversion of sinners. Feeling that 'Except the Lord build the house their labour is but lost that build it,' they beseech all Christian people to join with them in pleading, day by day, before and during the Mission, for the outpouring of that Divine Spirit by Whom alone a single soul can be either awakened or brought to the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

I trust that all the Communicants in St. Peter's will respond to this appeal and pray not merely for our own parish but for the Mission generally.

I ask you all

1. To remember it at every Holy Communion.

2. To set apart a special time every day for special intercession.

3. To remember it at family prayer.

4. To prepare your own hearts by self-examination, repentance, and faith, that you may draw near in a right spirit to the throne of grace.

I hope that the following prayer will help you, either as a form which can be used day by day, or as a model on which to frame your own intercessions.

Then, after some advice about the preparation for praying, follow the same prayers which had been used at Bishop Auckland, with a few small alterations.

At St. Peter's, Windmill Street, as at Bishop Auckland, Wilkinson took the chief part of the Mission himself, and the two assistant curates also took their parts. But he had, besides, the aid of one of the men best qualified by experience of any in England for the ministry of conversion, Mr. Twigg of Wednesbury.

The Mission, writes one who was present, was held in a large loft over stables, which also served for the Sunday School. [This was doubtless used for the After-meetings and for special gatherings of various kinds.] During the Mission, the Vicar and Mrs. Wilkinson came down most afternoons, bringing a little dinner to have in the vestry, and going out to invite the people, until the time of the service. Before the Mission service each

night, the Vicar, with his Curates, robed, and the Choir, went with lights round the parish, singing hymns. The result was, the people came crowding into the Mission Room. It was a wonderful time of blessing. What all felt and saw was his entire dependence on the great Father in heaven, and the intense love he had for souls, and his firm faith in our Saviour's love for all.

On the Friday of the Mission, November 19, a conference of the clergy taking part in the Mission was held at Sion College, for the purpose of comparing notes. 'There was,' says the 'Guardian' of the following Wednesday, 'a universal expression of thankfulness for the success which had so far been obtained. . . . Great unanimity prevailed at the meeting, though there were clergy of very different schools of theology present.' On the Thursday after, another conference was held in the same place, 'to discuss the proceedings of this Mission, that advantage might be taken of the experience gained to avoid any mistakes which might have been made, and to suggest any improvements which might seem desirable,' and also 'to consider whether it was desirable to hold a similar Mission next year.' This question was postponed for further consideration in the beginning of the following year. Wilkinson was unable to attend the postponed meeting, but prepared a Report to be presented to it, and gave his opinion on the subject of a second London Mission. The Report is as follows :

ST. PETER'S, WINDMILL STREET

I. Mission Service.—A Hymn—A Collect. The Sermon, Hymn after Sermon (generally 'Lord, in this Thy mercy's day' sung on our knees). No offertory. A box at church door. Notice of After-meeting given emphatically before or after Sermon.

II. Other Services.—Holy Communion every day at 8 A.M., once at 6.30, twice at 11 with a Meditation. Morning and Evening Prayer at 10 and 5.

Thanksgiving Service consisting of address, adult Baptism, General Thanksgiving, some psalms and hymns, ending with *Te Deum*.

III. Meetings and other means before and during Mission, besides Advertising, Pastoral Letters to every Room, Handbills, &c.:

(*A.*) *Before.* Meeting of Visitors, Teachers, &c., to explain and prepare for the Mission. 'Suggestions for the Mission' gone through with all who were about to work in the Mission. Meetings for prayer. Special work assigned to each individual who volunteered. Frequent practisings of hymns by congregation. But *especially*

1. *Classes for Communicants* held in church, to teach self-examination. Sins suggested, 5 minutes' silent confession. So leading on to completeness of pardon through Christ. Peace and joy of believing, how to be obtained. (This greatly blessed.)

2. Meeting for working men. A letter sent to every working man known to us—his name filled up *in writing* by the visitor—the envelope directed to him—his help invited. Then meeting at which the Mission explained and a body of volunteers enlisted. Then letter to thank them, and remind them of their promise.

(*B.*) *During Mission.* Persons at door of church to invite people to After-meeting. Little meetings of clergy and others, to pray for individual cases and Mission generally. But especially

The After-meeting. . . .

IV. Effects.—All our strength was concentrated on 'outsiders'—on awakening, rather than building up. I divide, therefore, results into indirect and direct.

i. *Indirect.*

(*a*) Formal Communicants broken down with sense of sin.

(*b*) Earnest Christians wrote letters to acknowledge new Blessing received.

(*c*) Those who undertook merely formal work in showing people to seats, &c., were laid hold of by what they felt to be the power of the Holy Ghost.

ii. *Direct.*

(1) The lowest outcasts (in 3 special cases) brought to church reclaimed.

(2) Many unbaptised brought to Holy Baptism.

(3) Previous teaching riveted, and the will gained for God in many instances of careless church goers (especially where much prayer had been offered in their behalf, e.g. husbands whose wives had long prayed for their conversion).

(4) Many utterly careless, broken down—so convinced of sin that instead of going to bed they went home to seek for mercy—wrestled with God for days at every opportunity till they found peace through the Saviour.

V. Personal Interviews, Means taken to Secure.—

1. The people had for a year been trained to come to the Vestry in cases of awakening.

2. Frequent invitations in church.

3. Appointments made at After-meeting by Visitors and Clergy when the soul was impressed—not leaving the impression to be effaced on the morrow, but fixing the time and obtaining the promise to go to the Vestry at a fixed time on the next day.

VI. After Work.—Three classes a week at first, then two, then one, held in church for instruction. Special cases handed over to trustworthy Visitors, &c. In consequence of leaving the parish I have been unable fully to carry out my plan of after classes, but have provided so far as I was able for their being taught by individual workers, or absorbed into the regular Communicant Classes.

Opinion as to Mission in 1870.—As I may not be present at their next meeting I earnestly ask the Committee to consider the following points:

I. The Mission as a whole has been greatly blessed. Its power has been felt (see especially an article in 'Guardian' for Wednesday, Jan. 12., as contrasted with the tone of that Journal at the beginning of the Mission). Therefore we must take care not to mar the work by another Mission unless we are fully persuaded that it is well to undertake it.

II. Those who originated this Mission felt in a peculiar way that they were called to it by God the Holy Ghost. We have all observed instances of His preventing and furthering grace—difficulties removed—objections silenced—mistakes over-ruled, &c. Unless we have the same consciousness of His Presence we dare not attempt so great a work. For these reasons we have need for special care. Our present decision is intensely important.

Mission not to be Annual.—For obvious reasons I am entirely opposed to an *Annual* Mission. It must be regarded by ourselves, and we must teach others to regard it as exceptional.

Not to be held in 1870.—*a.* If we have a Mission this year, it will be difficult to prevent people from considering that it is to be annual.

b. Moreover it seems unadvisable to spend the best part of another winter upon an exceptional effort to the neglect of ordinary parochial work.

c. Besides it is very doubtful whether we can prepare as we ought to prepare for a Mission this year (1870).

Yet to be held soon.—Yet it is evident that in many parishes only the surface has been skimmed—that many who stood aloof last year would now help us—that all which has been done only reveals the magnitude of the work which still remains. It would therefore be a misfortune if the Mission of 1869 were not *supplemented* by another mission.

If possible in 1871.—I should suggest, therefore, that some

time in 1871 be selected, e.g. November or Septuagesima—that all who are able to sympathise with our work be invited to bring the matter before their communicants as a subject for special prayer during the Advent of 1870 (and if the Mission be not held till late in '71, during the Lent of that year), to pray God, it it be His Will, to help us in our arrangements as He helped us last year—if it be not His Will, to teach us to recognise His hand in any obstacles by which our own plans may be hindered.

I venture to think that such a course will command the confidence of the Church as showing that we realise the magnitude of the work, that we undertake it *calmly* and *deliberately*, that above all, we are honouring God by submitting our plan to Him, ready either to abandon or carry it forward, as He may see fit, *waiting* till we can clearly recognise His guiding Hand—embodying in our practice what has been so often expressed in connexion with the last Mission—that a Mission is emphatically a work of God—a gift of God—that in it we do not attempt to get up a revival, but go forth with the conviction, *gained* by *prayer and watching*, that He has *sent* us. 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit.'

It has been felt worth while to give these details with some fulness, because the Twelve Days' Mission was the first Mission on a great scale in England, and Wilkinson was one of those who contributed most to create the type which has been so frequently followed since.

The Mission at St. Peter's called forth many expressions of kindness and gratitude. One gentleman wrote to ask to bear the whole expenses of it. Many testified to the blessings they had received through it. A parishioner, probably of no high order of education, sent the Vicar an anonymous letter, in which he said :

The Mission is past, but not the memory of it. That must, I think, live very very long. . . . When announced, there seemed something vague about its purpose ; now it is past, it leaves in my breast a vivid sense of something beautiful, holy, and comforting—the almost superhuman efforts of a good man to raise his fellow men from earth to heaven. I regret to say I attended the Schoolroom meetings but twice—once being Thursday—and it was on Wednesday the deep impression was made on my mind. I saw you there, Sir, amongst your flock, and was struck by their earnest attention. Each one's face showed the power of your words, and in that low, humble-looking

room, seated on the children's forms there was indeed something solemn. I saw why it is called a work; and you, Sir, in your close black dress looked indeed like the good workman earnestly at work to find out, correct, strengthen, and comfort each heart. Were I an artist, I would paint two pictures to commemorate. One should be the good workman preparing for the work, yourself in private prayer. The other, the good workman at his work, yourself as I then saw you standing amongst your kneeling flock, their bodies low, but their minds lifted high from this wicked selfish world. . . . To-day I witnessed the baptism of grown up persons, and though I have often remarked the service in the Prayer-book, and almost wondered at its use, I never saw it before, and was surprised at its beauty and applicability to all present.

I had a letter from W., says Mr. Green, just as he was leaving this parish (St. Peter's, Windmill Street) in which, referring to the great work before him at Eaton Square, he says that he finds encouragement in the thought how God has heard prayer in the past—'Church full, offertory doubled, communicants more than trebled, souls saved—the church now open all day, choir surpliced, and reverence of the congregation everywhere remarked upon.'

The following letter will give an idea how the writer stood at the time with regard to the party with which he was chiefly associated in the Mission.

To the Rev. C. Green

46 Devonshire Street: Dec. 24, 1869.

Thanks for your note, telling me what specially to think of when praying for you. I strongly sympathise with you, and have expressed my opinion to the Ritualist party. The only time that I stand by them is when I am in the company of their foes, and then I bear witness to what I have learnt in quiet half hours of spiritual communion with some of them, how closely united they are to our Lord in heart and life.

You can see, I doubt not, the meaning of this introduction of 'competition' into the newspaper account. Our dear Lord in His love gives each of us a part of His cross to bear, and it would not be a cross if we did not feel it, and so each one receives that which specially touches His own peculiar temperament.

You will find His peace come into the soul as, like St. Stephen, you look through the opened door and calmly gaze upon Him till you are able to reproduce His life in your life. The flesh says, 'Convince them that we had no need of any help in the race. We were ahead.' The Spirit writes on the heart, 'He opened not His lips.' How hard, He knows; but Christmas tells us that it is a Human Saviour, Very Man, like to us in all things, one who feels *with* us.

FOURTH PERIOD

ST. PETER'S, EATON SQUARE

CHAPTER I

ENTRANCE UPON THE NEW WORK

In the midst of the work of the Twelve Days' Mission Wilkinson received the most important call that had yet come to him. Many would say that it was the most important in his life. The Mission began on Sunday, November 14. On Monday, November 8, he received a letter from John, Bishop of London, offering him the vicarage of the church for ever afterwards to be associated with his name, and famous all over the world, because of its connexion with him, as St. Peter's, Eaton Square.

It was a bold and adventurous action on the part of Bishop Jackson. He had himself only just entered upon his vast field of labour, in succession to Archbishop Tait. He was a man of caution and moderation, not at all drawn to anything extreme, and Wilkinson, especially since the Twelve Days' Mission had been taken in hand, had come to be definitely associated with prominent High Churchmen. People in 1869 were not as much used to High Church ways, or to the spectacle of High Church appointments, as they are now. Perhaps no Bishop in England at that time had given important preferment to anyone so markedly connected with that side. But Bishop Jackson had well weighed the matter, and he understood the man. It does not seem that there had been any close relation between him and Wilkinson before; but Bishop Jackson was an intimate friend of Mr. Kempe, his successor at St. James's, Piccadilly, and doubtless he had heard much from Mr. Kempe about the young Vicar of St. Peter's, Windmill Street, and was sure that he was the right man for the Belgravian parish.

On receiving the Bishop's letter, Wilkinson's first thought was of his flock in Windmill Street, to whom he had become, as he said, passionately attached. He wrote back to the Bishop asking for advice and guidance, and begging him especially to consider what was best for the work into which he had now for two years thrown all his heart. The Bishop answered:

I have been trying as far as possible to put myself in your place, and my conclusion is that in it, I should feel myself obliged to take St. Peter's, Pimlico.

A difficult and important work thus offered comes as near to a call from the Master of the Vineyard to go work there, as anything can be which has to be gathered from the indications of God's providence; it *may* be a sin to disregard it. There is no physical or other disqualification, which can be fairly taken as providential hindrances.

But if it be so, then may we trust that the great Master has also His purpose of mercy to carry on in your present Parish, by means of His own, wiser and better, no doubt, than ours.

From my own point of view, I may add that after much consideration and much prayer, I have been led to think that you would—should God grant His blessing—be best calculated for usefulness in this particular post; and I am also sure that it would not be long before you would have the same practical problem to solve, under the offer of some other charge which probably would not offer so wide a field for hard work for God.

On Martinmas Day, Wilkinson wrote his acceptance of the change. He was instituted on St. John the Evangelist's Day. On the first Sunday of the New Year, which was January 2, 1870, he read himself in.

He was followed to the new parish, as at former removes, by a chorus of blessing from the old. More than a thousand names of people resident in the district, most of them belonging to the poorest stratum, were inscribed upon a roll which accompanied an address. One class of poor women gave him a print of Christ walking on the waters, with a letter in which they said:

Your leaving us is a matter of deep sorrow to us all, as you must well know. There has been something so blessed and sacred in our relations; you have watched over us so prayerfully, never

sparing yourself when we have been needing your help. We can never thank God enough for the past few months, and never cease to cherish your memory in our prayers and in our hearts. And now, many of us, at least, are longing to carry out in our lives the teaching God has given us through you, and deeply feeling our weakness are taking as our motto your last two texts, ' Looking unto Jesus,' and ' My grace is sufficient for thee.'

Another class wrote :

We hope you will kindly accept these little offerings, as tokens of our gratitude and affection. We feel that we can never thank you sufficiently for all your kindness, and for all that you have done for us. Please think of us sometimes, when you use them. We need not tell you how very very sorry we are that you are going.

The parish-workers, fifty-two in number, joined to give him an engraving of Holman Hunt's ' Finding in the Temple,'

impressed with a deep sense of gratitude to Almighty God for sending you to minister amongst us, and bearing in affectionate remembrance all the good and spiritual benefits we have received during the time you were our Pastor.

In his reply to the donors of this last gift Wilkinson said that he had long wished to possess that engraving, but should value it ' still more as the memorial of the happy hours which we have spent together in the dear little Church in Windmill Street and in our Upper Room in Rupert Street.'

I shall pray the all-loving Father, he said, to deepen in your hearts every holy impression, which has been there planted by His Holy Spirit, that you may become strong in the Lord, able everywhere to bear witness for our crucified and ascended Redeemer, not satisfied with the salvation of your own souls, but watching and praying and working, that in the day of His appearing you may be able to present to Him many who, through your instrumentality, have been led to know and love Him.

It was with unfeigned reluctance and regret that Wilkinson left the old work for the new. Besides the personal attachments which he had formed in Windmill Street, he felt, as he wrote to

Mr. Kempe, that he was 'abandoning half-developed efforts.' And there were serious drawbacks to set against the attractions of Eaton Square. Wilkinson was not insensible to the worldly advantages which it offered. He felt only too keenly for his own comfort what an appeal it made to ambition and the love of power and influence. From a mercenary point of view the contrast was great. The vicarage of St. Peter's, Eaton Square, was reckoned at 1000*l.* a year; that of the other St. Peter's was nominally 250*l.*, and Wilkinson wrote to Mr. Kempe, 'You know that I only got 9*l.* from it last year, out of which I had to find a house.' But the stipend at Eaton Square was largely derived from pew rents; and even if Wilkinson had not learned by the experience of Bishop Auckland the disadvantages of the pew-rent system, it was certain that a man of his temperament would look upon it with repulsion. He implored the Bishop to allow him to make the whole church 'free and open,' and to throw himself solely upon collections and subscriptions. The Bishop's answer—so Mr. Green says—was, 'No, you must take things as they are.' Wilkinson used afterwards to speak of his position to Mr. Green (who had been at one time a Congregationalist) as 'no better than that of a so-called Independent Minister, dependent on the good will of his congregation'; but he lived to think that Bishop Jackson's decision was in many respects a wise one.

In some ways he found it harder to take to his Belgravian work than to take to the work which he was now leaving.

I did not feel desolate, he said once to his daughter, speaking of his beginnings at Windmill Street, although every one pitied me. As soon as I stood in that little church, I felt sure that God would be with me. The time I really felt desolate was when I read myself in at St. Peter's, Eaton Square—and oh! there I did feel desolate!

The appointment of a new vicar at St. Peter's, Eaton Square—writes one of his most devoted disciples and most valued helpers, the Hon. Emma Douglas Pennant—as successor to the Rev. Thomas Fuller, who had resigned in 1869, and who had been appointed the first Vicar of St. Peter's in 1826, was a time of much wondering and anxiety. Many were the surmises as to

what he would be like, what he would do, and what he would expect his people to do. Various were the hopes and fears—hopes, from a few, that things might improve, but fears from many more, lest the new vicar, who was said by some to hold 'advanced opinions,' would disturb the quiet monotony which reigned at St. Peter's, by the introduction of innovations which existed in some of the neighbouring churches. The remembrance of the troublous days of Mr. Bennett some twelve or fifteen years before at St. Paul's, Knightsbridge, was still in the minds of many of the older members of the congregation.

St. Peter's, Eaton Square, writes the Rev. J. H. Moore, was an old-fashioned congregation, more than a little imbued with devotional ideas of the Georgian period. Mr. Wilkinson's predecessor, the Rev. Thomas Fuller, was an old college friend of my father's (at St. John's College, Cambridge), and was always 'old Fuller' even in his undergraduate days. I was myself partly brought up in the 'use' of St. Peter's, and remember my pleasure at finding, on coming home from my curacy in Yorkshire, that Mr. Fuller had introduced daily prayers, but at a time which no doubt suited many of his parishioners, 11 A.M.

The last vicar was very good, Bishop Wilkinson said in speaking of those times; although he knew my views were more advanced than his own, when people came to him to discuss with him things that I was doing, he invariably said, 'Oh, that is delightful; it is exactly what I hoped he would do.' When I came, I was told that St. Peter's and the two neighbouring churches were said to be high, low, and slow; and the old vicar was much puzzled to know why St. Peter's was called slow, 'because,' he said, 'people go out quick enough when the service is over.'

Mr. Wilkinson's appearance, Miss Pennant says, reassured anxious parents. The cut of his coat was certainly *not* that of a Ritualist, and the congregation were hopeful.

The *sad* look of 'the new clergyman'—as he was called for many years—so long that he said he often used to wonder whether he would ever lose that title—will never be forgotten by those who were present on the first Sunday that Mr. Wilkinson took the service after his appointment to the living. As he surveyed his congregation from the pulpit—one of the oldest

fashioned 'three-deckers' with reading desk and clerk's desk attached—his face presented a distressed and rather hopeless aspect. The fusty, old-fashioned, high-pewed church—with no chancel, galleries on both sides, and at the west end, where there were two or three tiers of galleries and the organ above, nearly in the roof, where the choir, such as it was, also sat—must have been at least oppressive to a young vicar who had been used to more church-like buildings. Report says that the following day Mr. Wilkinson begged to be released from the burden, which he felt would be more than he could manage; but Bishop Jackson wisely declined to grant his request.

Before beginning the new work, it was necessary to get a break. There had been some idea of visiting his old friends in the county of Durham; but he was obliged to abandon it, and to go further afield.

To the Rev. C. Green

46 Devonshire Street [Jan. 1870].

I find I cannot go North now. My head is tired, and I must rest before I face *Belgravia*, and Auckland is not rest, and Seaham is not rest. So I go abroad, please God, next week. . . . Think of me as I do of you—7000 rich, 7000 poor, all to begin. And yet, how He has heard prayer in the past!

He went, with his wife, to Cannes, which had done him so much good in the Auckland days. Lady Grey was there, and they saw much of her. They met also many well-known people—among them some who became, if they were not already, adherents of St. Peter's.

To Miss Trotter

Cannes: Feb. 14, 1870.

All the details of that work [at Great Windmill Street] I will keep till, please God, we meet. The wondrous blessing of the last nine months was beyond all that words can express. If you are ever filled with doubt as to the power of Auckland prayers, that alone is sufficient to bring back your faith. It is an evident work of God, clearly acknowledged on all sides as His work. It has taught me much—far more than I can express in a letter. One part only I will dwell upon. I realise as I never realised before (God help me to put it into practice) the reality of that

ST. PETER'S, EATON SQUARE, IN 1870.

supernatural Kingdom in which we are, by His great love, placed. Yes, it is real—the wondrous fact that we, the members of the mystical Body, are so lost in Him, the glorified Head, that our wretched sin-laden individuality is, as it were, absorbed in Him. . . . True, moreover, are all the details of that supernatural Kingdom, the perpetual repetition, so to speak, of the Incarnation in each regenerate soul—Christ in us; the Ladder from earth to heaven—the wondrous efficacy of prayer. . . .

The more I hear, the more I feel how tiring is the work which lies before me; but, thank God, I am now quite well. I know I shall have your prayers that I may be wise and brave and forbearing.

It was the Lenten Ember-week when they got back to London. The parish had been left in the charge of Mr. Cope and Mr. Wyche, who came on with the vicar from Windmill Street. He was soon joined by another fellow-helper, of whom Miss Pennant says:

Before leaving, he entered into an engagement with another young curate, the Rev. Arthur Williamson, who was then at Weedon in Northamptonshire. He came to preach at St. Peter's the second Sunday after Mr. Wilkinson's appointment, at the evening service, when the Vicar heard his very excellent and earnest address from a front seat in the gallery, where he remained long after the close of the service on his knees in prayer—one felt sure, praying for a blessing on his future curate. Mr. Williamson joined the staff on the Vicar's return from abroad in the spring of 1870. The choice of this curate was a happy one for the Vicar and his people. He was a most able helper, the Vicar only having to give an idea of what he wished, and all was carefully carried out by Mr. Williamson's active, energetic brain. He was a real organiser, methodical and businesslike, far-sighted, tactful, and loyal, therefore an invaluable helper in the gigantic work which was about to develop at St. Peter's under Mr. Wilkinson's rule.

There was at this time no vicarage belonging to the benefice. Mr. Fuller had had a private house at the end of Eaton Place. Mr. Wilkinson took a house in Warwick Square. There he lived for two years and a half. When Grosvenor Gardens was first built a corner was left for a long time unoccupied. In course

of time a vicarage was erected there, chiefly by the liberality of the Duke (then Marquis) of Westminster, and Wilkinson moved into it in 1873.

A sample of the kind of trouble which awaited Wilkinson on his beginning work at St. Peter's may be found in a letter which he received from one of the churchwardens—the 'people's' churchwarden—to call his attention to 'an irregularity.' One of the curates had given notice that a collection would be made the next Sunday in aid of the Parochial Mission Fund, without consultation beforehand with the churchwardens.

I do not wish, said the considerate official, to place you or him in the unpleasant situation of not permitting the collection to be made on that day, as I think it possible the irregularity has been an oversight on his part and yours, but I give you notice that I shall not allow any similar collection to be made without having been previously consulted by you and given my consent to the same in accordance with the law and practice of the Church of England.

The said churchwarden, on one occasion, tore up all the notices of a meeting which the vicar had ordered to be placed in the seats in church. He canvassed his customers in the parish (he was a butcher) to get them to oppose the new incumbent. One of the customers, who was himself far from easy about the prospects, answered 'No Englishman would ever judge a man without giving him a trial.'

To the butcher's letter Mr. Wilkinson replied (March 22, 1870):

Dear Sir,—When you know me better you will find, as the laity in all my former parishes have found, how ready I am to avail myself of their advice in everything which concerns the well-being of the Church in which we are all alike interested. As, however, you have in your note adduced a claim which is unknown alike to the law and the custom of the Church, you have obliged me most reluctantly to lay your letter before the constituted authorities. I enclose the Archdeacon's judgment, which I shall be obliged if you will return. I am sure that on reading it you will regret that you should have greeted me with a letter which impresses all to whom it has been shown as framed

in an unfriendly spirit to your new vicar. I am happy in the hope that the discourtesy is only on the surface, and at all events I have no wish to refer again to the subject.

In spite of this soft answer, there was a painful scene in the vestry after the Communion on April 3. The churchwarden, although no such plan had ever been followed in Mr. Fuller's time, wished the alms to be distributed every Sunday amongst those poor people who were present on the day of the collection. He persisted in his annoyances till the end of the month, when he resigned his position as churchwarden. So little had his behaviour won approval in the parish that on April 30 a letter, signed by thirteen working men of the parish, was sent to the vicar in which they expressed their regret that the election of a churchwarden should have been made the occasion for expressions on the part of a small minority of their fellow parishioners of a different purport. 'We can only hope,' they said, 'that the remembrance of these expressions may speedily pass away to be never recalled.'

Wilkinson had written to Mr. Green on Easter Eve :

Let me have your prayers ; God is giving me much to cheer, but there is a churchwarden of the Westerton [1] type, who is putting me through the mill with the delicate torture in which a butcher of that mental construction delights. Monday's Vestry Meeting, 12 o'clock, will give him an opening.

Such being the kind of man whom the people might elect for churchwarden, it was the more necessary for the vicar to be careful in the selection of the man whom, according to custom, he had the right to nominate.

After much thought, Miss Pennant says, the Vicar fixed on a member of the congregation, Colonel Hogg, and offered him the post, which he accepted. Colonel Hogg belonged to a very Low Church family, who also attended St. Peter's Church in Mr. Fuller's time. With characteristic zeal, Colonel Hogg had expressed, unknown to Mr. Wilkinson, a desire to be church-

[1] The churchwarden who brought an action against Mr. Liddell, of St. Paul's, Knightsbridge.

warden under him, 'so as to be a thorn in his side,' and so repress his Romanising tendencies.

Colonel Hogg, or Lord Magheramorne, as he afterwards became—whose wife was Miss Pennant's sister—used often to tell the story against himself.

In spite of these expressed desires, his sister-in-law continues, Colonel Hogg became eventually the Vicar's most faithful ally and devoted friend, standing by him and helping him in all difficulties, in a way few could have done. Being very popular with all the leading families of Belgravia, he was able, when he himself gained confidence, to reassure his friends. And nobly did he work with his vicar to help him through many difficulties all the time Mr. Wilkinson was at St. Peter's, about 13 years. In this he was much assisted by his wife, who appeased many a threatened storm in the parish, though no one knew it at the time. There were difficulties, and insurrections, at different times, which required much tact to smooth. Sir James and Lady Weir Hogg, parents of the churchwarden, were constantly drawing the attention of their son to the pernicious teaching now given at St. Peter's, calling it Romanising. They had seats at the church in Mr. Fuller's time, but after ineffectual attempts to bring others to their views they left the church for one more congenial to their minds, when Mr. Wilkinson and his churchwarden had a time of comparative peace.

When the adjourned vestry meeting was held, the butcher offered himself for re-election, but failed to commend himself to the electors. A tailor named Payne was elected instead. He had been a churchwarden in Mr. Fuller's time, and lived close to the church. At first he conceived it to be his duty to keep a very severe eye upon everything that was done in the church, especially in the way of decorating the church for festivals; but after a while his daughter, who had become a member of the Missionary Guild of the parish, was induced to help in the decorations. Then Mr. Payne ceased to have any apprehensions. Whatever Colonel Hogg approved, he approved likewise.

The vicar's very tactful way of handling his difficult—one may truly say, 'stiff-necked'—people, writes Miss Pennant, soon disarmed many who were at first only too ready to take offence, and to remonstrate over any changes. Every minute detail of any alteration in the service or ritual of the church, such as coloured altar cloths according to the seasons, which were in those days considered alarming changes—a fusty old red velvet altar cloth having sufficed for all seasons for many years, excepting Lent, when a dusty, slate coloured moreen was used—all this was explained beforehand, with the reasons given, so that none could speak of the thin end of the wedge being driven in, or of any shuffling in of changes. All was openly given out and taught. The vicar's first appearance in the pulpit in surplice, after the black gown of the late vicar, caused some surprise. Was it not a ritualistic innovation? But he called attention to it, saying he hoped the congregation would excuse his surplice, as it was what he had always been used to.

According to one account, he turned the tables upon the other side, and spoke of the use of the black gown as a 'ritualistic' practice. No more remarks on that subject were made by the parishioners.

CHAPTER II

ST. PETER'S

It was indeed an astonishing ministry which began with Wilkinson's institution to St. Peter's.

Naturally, the centre round which all the work was grouped was the Parish Church. The building in which Wilkinson was at first called upon to minister was far from being the dignified structure which is now so well known.

> Built, says a newspaper notice, during a period when church architecture was a science wholly unknown to the world, the church exhibits a fair specimen of the grandiose style, having a gigantesque and useless portico, fashioned in stucco, after the type of that of St. Martin's in the Fields.

It had originally no chancel at all. The galleries on the north and south sides ran straight to the eastern wall. Over the altar there was a large picture of our Lord crowned with thorns, by William Hilton. It had been presented to the church at its first opening in 1826 by the British Institution, and when the new chancel was built, the vicar and churchwardens lent it to the Royal Academy, and obtained a faculty in 1877 to sell it to Sir Francis Grant for 1000*l.* The church was pewed with high pews, some of which, at least, were 'square pews.' The vicarage pew had the pulpit enclosed in the middle of it.

Outside the church stood a beadle, who, with many capes and a long staff, kept guard upon the steps. He was a familiar figure to the older generation of worshippers at St. Peter's. This functionary did not long survive the appearance of Mr. Wilkinson at St. Peter's. But the new vicar did not evict the good women who looked after the pews. At first he had a desire to substitute men vergers for them; but

Colonel Hogg was opposed to the project—it was almost the only project of Mr. Wilkinson's that he opposed. The church continued—and it was quite a feature of St. Peter's—to be served by deserving women; 'who were very glad of the place,' says Miss Pennant, 'and when our vicar had trained them not to be what he used to call "fussy, bustling old women," they did admirably, and were much better than idling young men.'

The church was not only unsightly and undignified; it was not large enough.

The great difficulty as time went on, in Mr. Wilkinson's parish, says Miss Pennant, was church accommodation. After a very few weeks, the Parish Church was so crowded that the free seats were occupied long before the service began, not by those for whom they were intended, but by the numbers who came from a distance to hear the vicar, or by those who could not get pews of their own. This was a great sorrow and anxiety to Mr. Wilkinson, who could not bear to feel his own poorer members of the Church were crowded out, and it also troubled him to see so many standing, all through the service, in spite of the energetic efforts of the officials to place camp stools in every available corner, which could be easily removed.

This was not a state of things that Wilkinson could long put up with. In the course of his second year in the parish he began to move for an improvement. From the first he took the parish and congregation into his confidence in the matter. He preached upon the subject in 1871. In the Magazine for January 1872 he wrote:

I have already expressed my feelings on this subject from the pulpit. I will only add my calm and deliberate conviction that if God from the beginning was pleased to accept the offerings of His people, and to require them to lavish upon His earthly temple their best and most costly offerings; if our Saviour, when on earth, was consumed (literally, eaten up) by zeal for His Father's House, we have no right to expect His blessing so long as we wilfully allow St. Peter's to remain in a condition which has made us a byeword in the whole surrounding neighbourhood. I feel sure that this neglect is the result rather

of want of thought than deliberate intention, and I pray and believe that before the year is over this blot upon our Parish may have been effaced.

At a meeting held on Tuesday, January 16, of that year (1872) it was agreed not only to build a new chancel, which was to be the first portion of the work undertaken, but to make many other improvements, which were specified in detail in the Magazine. It was estimated that the cost would be about 6000*l*. It was resolved that a circular letter should be sent through the parish, 'to ascertain the views of the parishioners with regard to the proposed alterations and improvements in the church, and how far their assistance might be reckoned upon for carrying them into effect.' The work was intrusted to the skilled hands of Mr. Arthur Blomfield. A proposal had been started that the entire church should be rebuilt; but the subscription list showed that this proposal was not looked upon with favour. Another proposal was to throw open the whole church, and have no more payments for sittings. But by the month of June the Committee abandoned both ideas, and agreed 'to direct all their efforts to the improvement of the interior of the church, these efforts having only been suspended that the feeling of the Parish with reference to the larger undertaking might be ascertained.' The definite suggestion which was ultimately accepted appears to have originated with the wife of the churchwarden, Col. Hogg. The first committee meeting for the purpose was held at Col. Hogg's house, but in the beginning of the following year it was thought advisable to transfer the management to the first Lord Chelmsford, and the subsequent committees were held at his house. Lord Colville of Culross was his able and enthusiastic seconder.

In June 1872 the sum promised had reached 5208*l*. By February 1873 the interior of the church had been invaded and the east end of the chancel boarded off; within the next month the process had reached across the ends of the aisles and galleries. By May the new entrances to the church were open and in use. On the eve of St. Peter the magnificent addition to the building was displayed, and the Bishop of London was

there to dedicate it, and preached, and celebrated the Eucharist at the new altar. The choir for the first time was habited in cassocks and surplices, and took its place in the chancel. Sir Joseph Barnby undertook the reorganisation of the choir, and for about three months brought a few of his choristers from Eton on Sundays to help in the singing.

The day of the reopening of St. Peter's was still further marked by the laying of the foundation stone of the noble daughter church of St. John's, Wilton Road.

The site, said a writer in the Magazine, has been the battle-field for many a struggle in prayer during the past months. At one time it seemed impossible that we should be able to secure it. Spite of disappointment, spite of fear, prayer never ceased to go up to God, that if it was His will the site might be secured; and on St. Peter's Eve it was felt that the answer to these prayers had been given.

The Bishop of London was present to take the service, and Lord Penrhyn laid the stone. The nave of the new church was ready in time to be used for the Mission of 1874, and the whole building was consecrated on July 4 of that year.

A great feature in the collection for St. John's Church was the help of the Penny Association. This was an association of poorer parishioners, who contributed 6*d*. a week to the funds. The sum thus raised mounted up to more than 1000*l*., which paid for the east window, the altar with its red frontal, and the decorations of the east end, and left a balance of 65*l*., which was given over to the Chancel fund of the Parish Church.

Queen Victoria subscribed 150*l*. to the work, on the ground that Buckingham Palace stood within the parish.

Wilkinson was fond of telling, on suitable occasions, the story of the way in which he was enabled to open St. John's Church free of debt. He looked upon it as a direct answer to the prayers that had been offered at the Saturday service of intercession. On a Sunday not long before the date at which the church was to be consecrated, he put about in the pews at St. Peter's an appeal for the sum required, together with forms to be filled up by people willing to contribute. 'By chance'

the Duke of Westminster had been breakfasting with friends hard by St. Peter's, and stayed on till near church time. Instead of going to St. Michael's, as his custom was, he accompanied his friends to St. Peter's. Taking up the paper in the pew before service began, he remembered that he had not yet subscribed to the building of St. John's, and filled up the form with a promise of 1000*l.* or 2000*l.*, whichever it was. Some while before, a similar paper had been filled up which turned out to be a stupid hoax, and Wilkinson found it necessary to approach the Duke delicately, to ascertain whether his promise was genuine. He found that it was so ; and the Duke told him that he had signed the paper before hearing the powerful appeal which Wilkinson made in his sermon.

But the vicar and his helpers were dissatisfied with what had been attained at the Parish Church. In the January Magazine of that same year (1875) the vicar wrote :

> The very Blessing that we have received from our God increases our responsibility. We have arrived at a critical time in our Parochial History. When a large number have become earnest, when the influence of Christ's Church is felt in a neighbourhood, the fervour of the first love is often replaced by a form of godliness in which its living power is practically denied. The material fabric, with its beautiful chancel and unattractive nave, will suggest to those who do not sympathise with us the idea of a *half-hearted* Church.

His wishes were not to be immediately attained ; but on January 9, 1875, a meeting was held, under the presidency of Lord Chelmsford, at which it was decided that the nave should be altered, in accordance with the scheme already proposed by Mr. Blomfield, at an estimated cost of 9600*l.* 'so as to render [St. Peter's] worthier of being the Parish Church of a great neighbourhood.'

The money came in so well as to justify the closing of St. Peter's for four months, from July 12 of that year. It was reopened on Saturday, November 27. The Bishop of London was again present and preached.

The change wrought, says a writer in the Parish Magazine, is so great that seeing it from within no one would believe that the nave had not been pulled down and rebuilt. The skill of the architect was taxed to the utmost to obtain a height equal to that of the chancel without destroying the construction of the existing roof and so adding greatly to the expense. . . . Under the clerestory comes the line of nave arches, five in number, which are carried on clustered stone columns. The galleries have been reconstructed, and the whole of the pews have been replaced by open seats. The east end of the chancel is to be decorated with mosaics representing scenes in the life of our Lord, the gift of an anonymous donor. Altogether the interior is now vastly worthier than it was of its high purpose.

The eastern windows, nine in number, had been already filled, in 1873, with beautiful stained glass in memory of Mr. Fuller, the first incumbent of the church. The powerful new organ had been erected in 1874, and used for the first time on All Saints' Day. The mosaics, which were added afterwards,

were given, a lady writes, by a worker who was drawn to the parish by the Vicar—Miss Lister-Kaye, who gave them out of her income, and of gratitude for all she had received at St. Peter's. She was one of an old-fashioned kind, who had been used to have a footman out walking behind her in London, and she worked at the first Mission, and brought many in. She was latterly obliged to be at Cannes all the winter.

The surprise and delight of those who had long worshipped at St. Peter's in old days, Miss Pennant writes, cannot be described; but well do those who were present remember their joy that day at the wonderful transformation. They could hardly believe it was the same church, and they thanked God from their hearts that He had sent this good Vicar who had effected this great change.

Words, my brethren, said the vicar, in preaching on Advent Sunday, are powerless to express the thankfulness with which I stand once more in my parish church to speak again in my Master's name to the souls which He has entrusted to my care. For many personal blessings; for the intense kindness and forbearance of my people during months of anxiety; for the

hearty co-operation of the entire parish in this our work of restoration ; for the unwearied efforts of the Committee ; for the free-will offerings alike of rich and poor, of old and young ; for the skill of the architect, the punctuality of the contractor, the unsparing self-sacrifice of the foreman of the works ; for the satisfactory results which are patent on every side ; for the glorious service of yesterday, so nobly rendered by our choir, we thank Him from whom all holy desires and all good counsels do proceed.

The 'Guardian' gave the following account of the reopened church and of the parish and of the work done in it :

The change in its aspect to those who had not visited it for many years was most striking, and the Vicar is to be congratulated on completing a work of such magnitude, while he has at the same time not only erected a second church (St. John the Evangelist, Wilton Road), at a cost of some 12,000*l.*, but has also purchased the lease of the old proprietary chapel of St. Peter, Buckingham Gate, which is used as a Mission church. The National Schools have also been rebuilt, and now provide accommodation for nearly 1,000 children, and St. Peter's Church has been enlarged and remodelled, at a cost, in all, of 22,000*l.*, while the offertories last year (1874) amounted to 580*2l.* 1*s.* 10*d.* Before proceeding to speak of the services of Saturday and Sunday in connection with the reopening, it may be of interest to glance at the work which is being carried forward in this large and important West-end parish, and which may be instanced as a striking illustration of the practical development of the Church's parochial system under conditions often held to be incompatible with its maintenance.

The parish of St. Peter's, then, is a large district situated near Victoria Station, in the comparatively modern suburb of Pimlico, or, as it is now the fashion to term it, Belgravia, a district which Dr. Hughson, in his 'Walks through London,' published in 1817, described as having 'increased from a few houses to a considerable town, having a number of handsome houses and a chapel.' St. Peter's was erected eight years later, when the population was still limited, but now within its boundaries there is a population of at least 13,000, and although the parish church stands amid houses of large size, inhabited by wealthy families, it has its poor districts, and thus may be said to include a representation of all sections of society.

That the Church has been brought home to all, and not merely to any one class of the parishioners, is evident by a glance at the various associations and institutions which are maintained by the people, and at the extensive system of services and devotional meetings in the three churches and schools. Daily prayer and frequent Communion are of course the constant rule, but in addition there are various meetings of devotion in the church, prayer meetings for intercession in the schoolroom, instructions to teachers, classes for women, Confirmation classes (250 candidates from the parish were confirmed last year), and Bible classes. A retreat, or, as it is termed in the notices, 'Three days for quiet meditation and prayer, when special addresses are given,' has also been held at the Church. This may be regarded as the spiritual part of the parochial work.

The temporal organisations are even more numerous and complete. In addition to the schools, working men's reading-rooms, libraries, and ordinary organisations, there is a Mission-room, at which all applications for relief are received, and where a book is kept in which the names of all who are sick in the parish are entered, and also a list of persons wanting work or servants out of place. Then, as a sort of central body, to watch over and regulate the relief of the necessitous, there is what is termed 'the Parochial Council of Charity,' the committee of which sits regularly twice a week, and to which all applications for relief are referred by the district visitors. Under the care of this administrative body, a large number of aged and infirm persons of approved character receive regular weekly allowances, while persons suffering from sickness or unavoidable misfortune are relieved temporarily according to the circumstances of each applicant. The real object of this system is to effect the complete and discriminating relief of the poor in St. Peter's parish irrespective of religious differences, and the treasurer is the senior curate, the Rev. Cyril H. E. Wyche. But the provision for the poor does not end here. A part of a house, the bottom of which is styled 'St. Peter's Hostel,' and is used as a parochial kitchen, has been fitted up as a permanent Home for Aged Communicants, where they may end their days in peace. The parochial kitchen, at the same place, is used for the provision of wholesome dinners and soup at a low rate, not to encourage mendicity, for the dinners are sold, but to give a better dinner to the poor than they can themselves procure for the funds at their disposal. Twice a week invalid

dinners and twice a week children's dinners are prepared, and, in conjunction with the Parochial Council of Charity, the kitchen last year supplied 600 pints of beef tea. Then there are clothing clubs and penny banks, while another useful institution is the Needlework Society, which not only supplies poor women with needlework, but has a sale of ready-made clothes every week. Located in the parish, though apparently a distinct organisation, is the Door-step Brigade, of which Mr. W. E. Hubbard is the honorary secretary. Under its auspices orphans or sons of very poor parents are trained for domestic service or a trade, a fee of 5*l*. being charged for each boy on admission, which helps to maintain him until he earns enough to support himself. The boys obtain employment at many houses in the parish in cleaning boots, knives, &c. Among other organisations may be mentioned the association for promoting the sale of pure literature in the parish, and an association for distributing fresh flowers among the poor, contributions for which, in the shape of hampers of flowers, are invited from the parishioners. There is also an annual flower show, with prizes for the poor who have grown plants at their homes.

And, while the home work of the Church is thus maintained, the various Church societies are not forgotten, but their claims are urged from the pulpit and supported from the Offertory. In the parochial accounts we find the record of considerable gifts to Church societies, and to interest the people in the work of the Church abroad there are missionary guilds, with a missionary library, and a ladies' working association, which sends out clothes to Missions through the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. The parish also keeps up its special interest in Mission work by providing a stipend for a missionary, and one of the clergy, the Rev. Charles P. Scott, who last year went out as a missionary to China, maintains constant communication with the congregation, his letters appearing from time to time in the Parish Magazine. The parishioners are thus led to feel a direct personal interest in the work of the Mission field. Mr. Scott bade farewell to the parish after a solemn valedictory service at the church, with an address by Mr. Wilkinson, and he has ever since kept up a record of his work. This brief outline of the numerous efforts which are made in St. Peter's parish will be sufficient to account for the crowded congregation which filled not only the body of the sacred edifice, but the large galleries, to overflowing on Saturday afternoon, when, with

every mark of thankfulness and joy, the now completed church once more opened its doors to grateful worshippers.

On the Sunday morning the vicar preached to a large congregation on the words 'Behold, thy King cometh unto thee.'

In earnest words, said the 'Guardian,' the preacher besought his people to realise the responsibilities thrown upon them by the possession of special means of advancing the cause of God and His Church in the world, not only by gifts of money, but by personal influence, and he reminded them that they must by God's help so strive to do their part that the words of the text might be accepted by every heart, 'Behold, thy King cometh.' . . .

Either Christianity was the veriest sham ever imposed upon the credulity of mankind, or else Christ was the King; and if He was the King He had a right to His servants' time, their money, their children, their reputation, their character, for their life, their all belongs to Him. . . .When they were satisfied in their own separate consciousness that the King had spoken, then, though every drawing-room in London might despise them as idiots, though even religious friends might be afraid they were injuring the cause of God, they could have no choice; they must either obey the Lord, or live as men who had rebelled against their King and despised the Word of Him by whom at any moment they might be called to judgment. . . . Christians, the preacher continued, did not sufficiently trust in the power of Him in whom they had believed. They were too much afraid of being counted unreal and hypocritical, and so forth; so anxious, in fact, about themselves that they dared not trust God's truth to the Holy Ghost by whom it was inspired. Rather they should, as St. Paul said, magnify their office as prophets. The child in the nursery, the boy at school, the servant in the hall, the rich man in his palace, the poor man at his gate, all had been baptised unto Christ one by one, in order that each as God's own prophet might bear witness. . . .

On Sunday afternoon Mr. Wilkinson commenced a course of Advent lectures, the address being delivered after, but distinct from, Evening Prayer, the bell being rung as for a separate service. A hymn having been sung, the Vicar, before commencing his address, explained the reason which had induced him thus to arrange a series of sermons in addition to those delivered

at the ordinary services. It was, he thought, very desirable that the sermons at Matins should be shorter than they had hitherto been, for while it would not be right to put any restrictions on strangers, the regular clergy of the church were bound not to lay upon their people a burden which they were unable to bear. At the same time, the Word of God was so holy, and the unfolding of that precious book was so important, that they must never in their love for their services or their worship undervalue the ordinance of preaching, which God had ever used for the awakening of the ungodly, and for the building up of believers. The object of this special service was, then, to provide for the ministry of the Word; and he prayed that they might see such an ingathering of souls as they had witnessed during a previous Advent, when the lectures on 'the Way of Salvation' were delivered. . . . Speaking of the nearness of Christ's second Advent, the preacher said that those who studied the Bible were convinced that the world was growing very old, and that there were signs that the Saviour's coming would not be long delayed. It appeared quite possible to those who thus studied their Bibles, and who judged from the signs of the times, that a great proportion of those who were then in that church might never be called to die. He would only say it was quite possible. Of course, in an ordinary congregation such a statement would be held to be a proof of fanaticism, but that was because the thought of Christ's second coming, which was so dear to the early Christians, had been almost destroyed by Satan. They constantly waited for it as the wife waits for her husband's return, but nowadays men lived as the living among the dead. The early Church waited for Christ's coming; now men wait to die.

A lecture of this kind at 5 o'clock on Sunday afternoons was a regular part of the work at St. Peter's. It was always well attended, and few things done there were more effective for good.

CHAPTER III

FEATURES OF PAROCHIAL WORK

Reverence was the first lesson which Wilkinson inculcated upon the worshippers in St. Peter's. Miss Pennant says :

Mr. Wilkinson from the first pressed on the congregation the sense of the church being the House of God, and the importance of a reverent behaviour when there—no subdued whispers even which might disturb other worshippers. Having noticed the way people knelt in those high pews, and how few knelt at all, he one day remarked, ' When you rise from your knees—or rather, I should say, from your elbows '—this could not fail to be understood.

At one of the confirmations at St. Peter's in the early seventies, the people in the church began talking rather loudly before the service, so that there was a buzz of voices. On the Vicar being told of this, he came out of the vestry and stood on the chancel steps, and said, ' The Lord is in His holy temple ; let all the earth keep silence before Him.' The effect was immediate, and there fell a hush all over the church.

Besides the ordinary services of the church, there were many other gatherings there and in the vestries for religious purposes. Of these none were more remarkable than the Saturday Prayer Meetings.

The weekly prayer meetings in the church on a Saturday evening, says one who remembered the starting of them, were instituted from nearly the beginning. How wonderful they were in their many sides ! At first they were rather against the feelings of some, who were not quite sure that they were not too *Low Church* in style. The Vicar, hearing these objections, said, ' Some of you may think this like the Dissenters ; but I am anxious you should know that I always have these prayer meetings on Prayer Book lines, and use Collects from the Prayer

Book—though of course Dissenters do have prayer meetings.' The wonderful way in which he first realised, and then prayed for, the needs of those who sent in petitions! The gathering up of the different duties of the congregational work, the ministers and people, and the weekly commendation of all to God the Holy Ghost! 'If anything offended—music, or sermon, or anything else'—he would say, 'let that worshipper pray about it.'

Shortly after taking up the work in 1870, says the same informant, Mr. Wilkinson instituted the weekly Bible Class, held down the centre aisle at St. Peter's, where chairs were placed in rows of four. 'Hints on the Devotional Life,' now printed, and many other courses of instructions were given here. The class increased in numbers after the first. There had been for some time a lurking fear lest there should be questions and answers to be given, and this dread kept many away for years. One in a high position, and living very near the church, who had in vain been pressed by a friend to attend, said, 'How sorry I am to have lost all that beautiful teaching. I went one day, and hid behind a pillar for fear I should be seen and questioned; but it was so different to what I expected. I envy those who had more courage than I had!'

The teaching given on Baptism, Holy Communion and Confirmation, so clearly and simply, was a great help to many who had little or no knowledge of Church Truths, their own Confirmation teaching having, as was more or less the custom in those days, been passed over in a class and a ticket given, with very little heart-preparation or knowledge of what it was. How many a mother in Belgravia heard then, when their children were attending classes, what they had never learned before, and thanked God for giving them, though late in life, such inestimable teaching, which had been neglected in their youth!

Another kind informant, the Mother Julian, of the Community of the Epiphany, writes:

As regards St. Peter's, Eaton Square, others will tell you better, though I was there from the first, and saw the wonderful and rapid development of that unparalleled work. The Devotional Meetings, Bible Class Meetings, Sunday School Teachers Meetings, &c., all held in the church, which was well nigh filled—all this emanating from a gathering of some half dozen of us in the little old vestry, called together by the vicar for prayer as well

as to organise work. Afterwards the gatherings for prayer, instruction, &c., were attended by women from all parts of London. The Bible Class for Gentlemen was an important feature of the work—of great interest to the Vicar and much appreciated by the members—a unique venture in London Society.

The Rev. F. E. Gardiner, now Vicar of Holy Trinity, Folkestone, and Canon of Truro, sends the following recollections :

The early years at St. Peter's are more vivid to me than the later ones, as in 1879 I removed to Truro. I was formerly a curate of St. Matthew's, Westminster, this parish being one chosen by Mr. Wilkinson to help both by the prayers and active co-operation of his own people. In this way I was brought into constant contact with St. Peter's, its services and organisations, and had many opportunities of seeing the results of Mr. Wilkinson's teaching in the lives and active work of many of his flock.

Amongst the many services held at St. Peter's none to me was more striking in its force and reality than the weekly Saturday evening Prayer Meeting, and I can never forget the inimitable way in which you were almost compelled to pray for individual cases whether you wished to do so or not. He would by some extraordinary touch bring the whole case before you—some homely detail—some sympathetic allusion—there it all was, and *you* could help, and could supply the need. . . . And his intimate knowledge both of his Bible and Prayer Book took away all wearisomeness, all monotony, all that might easily become unrestful and unhelpful. Nothing was forgotten—no worker, no event, national or at home, no sorrow, no joy—all was gathered up here, focussed, laid down, and *left* week by week with Our Blessed Lord.

His District Visitors were definitely instructed how to bring people to a knowledge of the Faith—simple definite steps had to be taken—rules about prayer—common sense, tact, sympathy, the need of patience, true courtesy, humility, in themselves were above all enforced. Their ' business ' was to bring others ' into the light.'

All this uplifting of the ordinary details of parochial work raised St. Peter's to a great height of spiritual influence—you

felt it in the simplest meeting as well as at some great impressive service.

And yet none of us probably knew at what a cost to himself. The constant touch with the sin and sorrow—the inconsistencies and disappointments—the gossip—the treatment given by Church workers to those below them socially—the world's power, especially in the season—the unhealthy 'curiosity' about spiritual things . . . all this made the burden very heavy.

At one time the spiritual tension was so great that one felt it was almost more than could be borne, and I remember hearing one of the best known St. Peter's clergy say that if it increased there was a very real danger of some reaction.

For while there was never any diminution in the devotion of his people, there were many, especially among the laity, who did not feel attracted by his preaching or his strong personal touch.

In later life I think he felt that if he was to begin again his methods would be rather different—in the earlier days of his ministry perhaps he expected certain things from those in need of spiritual help—perhaps a power of prayer which they had not got—perhaps certain 'feelings.' . . . As he grew older, and his insight into characters increased, and his hold on all that the Church could supply grew stronger, I think he claimed less that souls should do as he himself did, or should 'see' as he saw; increasingly he felt that each one had his own treatment—his own individuality.

A certain melancholy in those early years pervaded his work, which grew less and less as life went on. His sympathy with every form of suffering and sorrow was ever the same, and his understanding of human life and character. His common sense never failed him. 'Tell your husband to cultivate your lay mind,' he said to the wife of a priest who had lately married; he did not think that we were meant to live moulded on some particular plan—we must be 'ourselves,' though surrendered to God's will in every detail of life.

His tailor once spoke to me of the way in which the Bishop had suggested on one of his visits to him that they should ask God's Blessing upon his work, at the same time saying that this was the only occasion anyone had ever helped him in this way.[1]

[1] Mr. George Wilkinson says, 'The tailor told me that my father always came down stairs and opened the front door for him, and shook him by the hand.'

Before my ordination he advised me to make a rule of half an hour's private prayer in the course of every morning's work, and I have never ceased trying to carry it out. I have known him under many circumstances of joy and deep sorrows, and always found him the same helpful friend—he always, above all, brought home to me more than anyone else the Unseen, the Realities of life.

Lady Emily Chichester says :

The sermons and addresses of his first Lent at St. Peter's were very striking, and the church rapidly became crowded to hear him—ugly as it was ! and from much he said one felt he so deplored the bareness of the altar, &c. So before Easter (we did not then know him personally) we wrote him a letter, asking if he would let us make a floral cross for the altar for Easter Day—and he wrote back such a charming answer, saying he was ' sure it was the wish of our Lord to be worshipped in the Beauty of Holiness,' but that he feared his people were not yet quite ready for outward symbolism at St. Peter's, Eaton Square ; so he asked us instead to let him have a floral cross for his former church, St. Peter's, Great Windmill Street, where he said it would be thoroughly appreciated, which of course we gladly did. That incident led to our acquaintance. By the following Easter St. Peter's was bright with flowers. ' Three Hours ' services on Good Friday were little known in churches then—but in 1871 Mr. Wilkinson had ' Addresses and Meditations on the Passion and Death of Christ ' after Matins, until 3 P.M., on Good Friday, and thus trained many to accept and appreciate what is now commonly called ' The Three Hours ' service.

His first Churchworkers' Social Gathering was a great success, held during the Octave of St. Peter's Festival. His speech was so impressive ; and even as in his last speech in Edinburgh, so in those early St. Peter's days, he impressed upon us that the secret of success in his work had ever been beginning everything with prayer.

His Bible Classes at St. Peter's were a great help and delight to us all—not only those on ' the Devotional Life,' which were afterwards published—but also most beautiful ones on the teaching of the Book of Leviticus about the various Sacrifices, which foreshadowed Him who is the True Lamb of God,' saying he wanted us ' more and more as years roll on to understand

the meaning of Sacrifice,' and those lectures were full of sacramental teaching, and, as he said, meant to impress upon us ' the intense, indescribable help and blessing of Church Teaching ' —' how in the Holy Eucharist our Lord Himself is the full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice and oblation, the perfect offering, typified by these sacrifices of the old law.'

His Confirmation Addresses on Sunday afternoons he threw open to all, and they were very largely attended, and many grown-up people remarked that they quite envied the candidates being so well taught—that, although confirmed years before, they had never been taught properly till then, in fact felt their religious education but beginning !

Lent had never been so well observed in London as it was under his influence. Many fashionable ladies postponed giving their balls till after Easter after hearing his Lenten sermons, and every corner at St. Peter's was crowded Sunday after Sunday to hear him, many standing if no seat was available—but to his regular communicants his Saints' Day and other Week-day addresses were more specially dear.

The leaflets he had printed and circulated, called ' Hints for Communicants,' containing twelve rules, greatly helped to engender reverence at the Celebrations, and to teach people to come to an early Celebration—and even the most prejudiced could not be offended when they saw his humble heading : ' These hints are given with the desire, not to have dominion over your faith, but to be helpers of your joy.' And other books he recommended us to use constantly were : the ' Practice of the Presence of God ' ; Carter's ' Footprints of our Lord ' ; various books for the Passion Hours, and St. Thomas à Kempis' ' Imitation.'

Those who were lucky enough to know the dear Vicar, Mr. Wilkinson, cannot fail to remember with gratitude his wonderful sympathy in their joys as well as in their sorrows. When in deep anxiety one wrote to him, one never did so in vain, but felt sure of a ready response. At a time when Ireland was very disturbed in 1880, and there had been a terrible murder near us, and a coffin left at our gate with my Husband's name on it, feeling dreadfully anxious I wrote and asked Mr. Wilkinson to pray for his safety. By return of post I received the kindest letter, saying : ' Thank you very much for writing to me and showing me that you still look on St. Peter's as your Home ! I do indeed remember you and your Husband in my prayers,

and have asked a few privately to pray for you at St. Peter's.' And five years later, when the news of my dear husband's sudden death was wired to him, nothing could have exceeded his tender sympathy and kindness—his beautiful and helpful letters, and his own strong faith in the nearness of those within the Veil.

The following year, hearing our eldest child, Evangeline, was delicate, he most kindly arranged she should winter with him and his family at Truro, and nothing could have exceeded the endless kindnesses shown her by him and his year after year. And very precious are the memories of visits paid to them at Lis Escop. It was a delight to watch him in his home life—everything he did and everything he said was so teaching—and his devotion to his children so beautiful—and he was always so bright, and so enjoyed innocent fun and chaff. One day when speaking to me of his dear wife (to whom he was ever deeply attached) he said how he could hardly have lived through the agony of those days when she was taken from him, had it not been for the marvellous strength given in those daily Celebrations—and then he added : ' But as I look back upon the past I feel more and more how wonderful has been the gentleness of God towards me ! How very gently He has led me on through all ! '

Then his great tact and deep love of our Lord enabled him to win round many who had been before strong ' Evangelicals.' My dear old Father was such, but even after hearing Mr. Wilkinson preach *one* sermon at St. Peter's (which was on the text, ' The Lord, our Righteousness ') he came away so charmed with it, that he said he must lose no time in making the acquaintance of one who could preach so beautifully. And they soon became friends, and I remember Mrs. Wilkinson saying her husband told her it was a delight to him to talk with one of so saintly a character ; and very soon my Father came round to his teaching, and became devoted to St. Peter's and warmly supported its good Vicar.

The sister of Lady Emily Chichester, Lady Mary Cooke, says :

Never can I forget the great sensation he made when he came to St. Peter's in 1870 among old and young, rich and poor. He said to me once, ' I have been forced to speak out very openly, though I don't like it ; I am obliged to do so.'

He made allowances for all earthly failings, yet at the same time was so much opposed to anything that made a compromise with any principle of what he considered right as opposed to wrong. Yet he would often say, ' Remember God is King of His World, as well as Lord of His Church.'

When visiting Braemar with my dear husband we dined at St. Mary's Tower, where he was then residing, and after having been most genial all the time at dinner, and entered into all the conversation, he asked us afterwards into his study and then asked us both to kneel down whilst he gave us his benediction. My husband was very much impressed by that.

At St. Peter's, Eaton Square, as in the other places where he had laboured, Wilkinson made much of a social gathering held annually in connexion with the Dedication Festival.

Perhaps nothing was more remarkable than the way in which the sense of parochial unity was developed among a population which probably contained a greater social variety than any other parish in London.

I am glad, wrote the Vicar in the St. Peter's Parish Magazine for January 1872, that the increased circulation of our Parish Magazine is helping us more to realise the tie by which God has united us together as one family in Christ Jesus. Some of His children indeed have wandered far away, and are trying in vain to satisfy their immortal spirits with the husks of this world's pleasure, and business, and money-making. . . . Others are even now beginning to return. . . . Many, thank God, have already learned to know, and love, and live to, that all loving Saviour who died to redeem them, into whose Holy Church they have been baptised. . . . To all—the strong and the weak—the happy and the sorrowful—the young and the old—to all the members of the family of God who are gathered round the walls of St. Peter's Church, we wish, in the best and truest sense of the words, a happy New Year.

This note was continually emphasised.

For the purpose of helping us to realise—so ran a notice which appeared in successive numbers of the Magazine for that year—by an outward bond of union, our membership with Christ, and with one another, as well as for the promotion of the glory of

God by individual holiness and some useful work undertaken in His name, two Associations have been formed in connection with St. Peter's Church; one for young women and older girls, called 'The Association of St. Peter's Home;' another, for men and youths, called 'St. Peter's Union of Churchmen.'

The idea of a parish as a great Home—said the Magazine in November of the same year—in which the parishioners live as members of a united family, is by no means a novel one to most of our readers. Indeed, we rejoice to be able to say that in St. Peter's so much has been done to foster this idea, and give it a practical illustration, that we are beginning, both rich and poor, to be quite happy and at home in each other's society, and to have more and more the feeling of brothers and sisters towards one another. . . . It becomes the duty of every Parish Priest, and of all who are associated with him in the work, to contrive as often and in as varied a way as possible, to bring together the different members of the family, in order that their bond of union may be strengthened, and that there may be a continual circulation of love and interest between them.

These sentences served as preface to an announcement of 'Parish Evenings at Home' on Tuesdays throughout the winter.

I hope, writes a friend, that some one may have written on the wonderful feeling of family life which Bishop Wilkinson brought into the parish through his work and guilds. The work was difficult, there being such a number of all classes; but the feeling of being one family under Christ, with our Vicar as head of the parish, was developed in a marvellous manner, and no matter where we met, we recognised that we belonged to one another. The Women's Guild, and the Missionary Guild, were two great instances of how this worked. No one can believe how in those days the workers looked forward to their yearly or half-yearly meetings, and St. Peter's Week with its annual Church Workers' party, where all assembled in answer to the Vicar's invitation, and which was a fresh link to bind us together year by year.

The same writer says again:

The family feeling, though it is only what ought to be amongst all classes worshipping in the same church, was in those days more wonderful, as then so many would *not* mix except with their

equals, and it was Bishop Wilkinson who brought us all together in one family, the feeling of which still lives in the older members.

Mention has already been made of the new schools erected in the parish. This was in fact the first work on a large scale undertaken in Wilkinson's incumbency.

Everything had to be done at once, Miss Pennant says, Schools, Vicarage, Church, and so on. The School buildings, for boys, girls, infants, were all set on foot, as the former premises were quite inadequate for the numbers in the parish, and they were old, tumble-down buildings, most unsuitable in every way. Everything was taken in hand, and in 1872 the large Infant Schoolroom was ready for use, and very much in request for parochial gatherings of all kinds in the evenings.

The rest followed very speedily.

District Visitors were appealed for in 1870. There had been a very small number—five or six ladies—visiting the poor in Mr. Fuller's time under one of the curates, but no organised arrangement. Relief in those days was given away in the church, where the poor were told to apply after morning service one or two days in the week, and coal and grocery tickets were given by Mrs. Coppock, the excellent Mission Woman, with the sanction of one of the curates. The first attempt at a meeting for ladies was made early in 1870, in the grim old vestry of St. Peter's, where the few visitors then existing met. Mr. Wilkinson did little but speak kindly to those who had tried to visit the poor, and endeavoured to find out if they worked on any system as regarded relief. To one who had been longest in the work, and who held a weekly Mothers' Meeting, he addressed himself and asked 'What is your system of dispensing charity?' 'I give them everything they want,' she replied. 'Lucky people!' said the vicar, with unsuppressed amusement. It was some time before District Visitors came boldly forward, but in 1875 the number had reached between 40 and 50.

The parish in those days consisted of many more poor than now. The large houses in Grosvenor Gardens and the shops in Lower Grosvenor Place did not exist, and many more houses and lanes formed the poorer part of the parish, which then numbered 14,000 souls. It was equally divided between rich and poor. The poor were a very shifting set, who were constantly moving.

In 1872 and 1873 the Vicar was much occupied with arranging a system of Parochial Relief, being extremely distressed at hearing of the indiscriminate relief which was showered upon some families, while others were living in great need. An organisation for dispensing charity was formed, in which work the Vicar was ably assisted by a large band of gentlemen, who sat twice a week, and oftener at first, to receive cases for investigation, applications having been sent in by the District Visitors. A list was kept of those who received relief and also of those who had been refused, and the reasons given.

In this work the Vicar had much assistance from General Lewis, Lord Ashley, Mr. Reginald Hankey, Mr. Butler (now Viscount Mountgarret), and others. The system took long to perfect, and was by no means in favour with the visiting ladies for some years. But much overlapping of charity was suppressed, and funds were given in to the society for relief. For some years this gigantic undertaking worked well. It is impossible to realise what large organisations the Vicar had to start and keep going in those early years.

The parish was thoroughly divided into districts, and a lady appointed to each division under one of the clergy, to whom she was responsible. The Vicar pressed on the Visitors the importance of their work, and often said they were fellow-helpers in God's work with the clergy, who had not time to go everywhere. They were therefore to act as eyes and ears for them, and connect the clergy with their people. There was a monthly meeting for the Visitors. The business part was held in the old vestry, and they then adjourned to the free seats at the end of the church, where the Vicar spoke to his workers. The Visitors of those days can remember how they looked forward each month to the beautiful teaching and advice given. It was like a general calling his soldiers together, to give his orders and wishes to the parish ; and we always left strengthened for the next month's work, ready to go through anything as long as we might be called fellow-helpers with the clergy in their great work.

In a printed letter to his District Visitors, accompanying a statement with regard to the Parochial Council, its principles and rules, and dated May 1874, the Vicar said :

I am aware that you will sometimes find it hard to support the decisions of the Committee. The following suggestions may

perhaps be of use to you in the more difficult cases with which you have to deal.

1. If you are unable to help in paying *Arrears of Rent*, you can explain that the refusal of the Church to pay the arrears does not arise from want of sympathy, but from the fact that where those arrears have been thus paid, the rents have been raised in the neighbourhood, and so large masses of poor indirectly injured by the relief which had been granted to one or two individuals.

2. When you are obliged to refuse money for *Funeral Expenses*, you can remind your poor how money so granted has in some instances been wasted. . . .

3. When an application is refused on the ground of *shortness of residence*, you can explain how, without some limit in this respect, numbers would flock into St. Peter's, and so absorb the funds which are scarcely sufficient for the needs of the regular parishioners and permanent cases.

4. You can gradually remove the prejudice against the workhouse by going to see it, and thus enabling yourself to bear witness to the comfortable provision which is made for the inmates.

5. In any special case where you think that real good would be done if articles were *taken out of pawn*, write fully to the Committee. If they consider the case deserving they may, while refusing to make any money grant, themselves take the things out of pawn.

6. For those special cases which *for the sake of example* it is impossible to help from the general funds, but where there is a hope of a real spiritual improvement, the Committee have entrusted to my care a 'Lost Fund,' and have left it to my own judgment to decide as to the cases in which it shall be applied.

7. When a case is rejected, and your appeal to the Committee has failed, you can only throw the responsibility on them, and explain that you are unable to alter their decision, but are anxious to remain the friend of the poor person whose cause you have pleaded in vain.

He then proceeded to explain that much more personal liberty of action was left to Visitors than was commonly understood by those who had not carefully studied the rules and memoranda of the Council.

You will see, he continued, that, as Vicar of the Parish, I am bound to regard the question of Charitable Relief as a whole. I dare not shut my eyes to the harm that is done when alms are wrongly administered. Improvidence is encouraged, respectable workmen are irritated by seeing their own self-denial ignored and the money of the Church showered upon the self-indulgent and the intemperate. 'If a man will not work, neither shall he eat.' On the other hand I know that we serve One who is kind even to the unthankful and the evil, and who came on earth to seek and to save the lost. I know full well how often a little kindness shown by my Visitors has been the means of recovering those who would otherwise have become utterly reckless. . . .

I feel . . . that, after this letter, I may trust to the right feeling of my Visitors, either to carry out the principles which have been adopted, or frankly to tell me of their inability to work on a system which in their conscience they disapprove. In the latter event I will gladly find other work for them, and shall always thankfully remember the way in which, as a body, my Visitors have helped me during the last four years.

It will be observed that the Charity Organization Society had not at that time entered upon its career of influence and power. He and his helpers were in advance of the general opinion of the country. Probably at no other period in his life had Wilkinson occasion to go so fully into social questions of this kind. At a later time, chiefly through his friendship with Mr. Scott Holland, he became interested in the Christian Social Union ; but the subject was probably not one to which he was naturally much drawn.

CHAPTER IV

PREACHING AND THE PREACHER

GREAT as was his power of organising and directing the energies of others, it was in the capacity of a preacher, after all, that Wilkinson made his chief impression upon London.

The sermons, says Miss Pennant, how fearlessly he spoke! how earnestly he gave out the message which God had put into his heart! always speaking as if he had real knowledge of his people, a nail to be driven in somewhere, a purpose for all that he spoke out so bravely. The arrows were aimed at hearts, and went in.

He said afterwards that when he was first appointed to St. Peter's he intended to set himself to prepare sermons of the university type, but that illness prevented him from doing it, and he had to fall back upon what he had preached at Seaham Harbour. He found that human nature was much the same everywhere, and that what suited the fishermen and miners of Durham suited also the lords and ladies of Pimlico.

Of all modern preachers who have gained the ear of the public, said a rather typical journalist in 1874, none has achieved such distinction by the force of sterling merit more thoroughly than Mr. Wilkinson. His congregation is drawn from the mansions of our most opulent quarter. From their pastor they expect much; in him even more. . . . The man to suit them must be their equal in polish, their superior in breadth of knowledge, and to boot an orator capable of raising their mind above the level of languid attention. Add to this that he must mean at least all he says, and must be prepared to exhibit an example of practical devotion, and you have an outline of the elements which are essential for a Belgravian incumbent who would command success. Suffice

it that Mr. Wilkinson possesses each one of these essential qualifications in an extraordinary degree. . . . As a conscientious worker he may fairly appeal to his parish, the machinery whereof is probably unrivalled in the metropolis, whilst his outspoken independence extorts homage from his auditory, inasmuch as hardly a Sunday passes but he attacks in a spirit almost democratic the foibles, vices, and follies of the age in which we live, and of the class which, in virtue of its autocratic position, is most exposed to these temptations.

Yesterday morning St. Peter's was so overcrowded that some hundreds of gentry who came, Prayer Book in hand, were obliged to seek another sanctuary, there being neither sitting nor standing room. Pewholders showed themselves obliging enough in volunteering seats for strangers, and the attendants had provided a goodly supply of chairs. Yet, in spite of all precautions, so dense was the flux of worshippers, that before the conclusion of the prayers the doors had to be fastened on the ground floor, and fresh comers were directed to the gallery with the cold assurance that there was no ingress, the very landing being wholly occupied. The service was semichoral, the psalms, canticles, and responses being chanted by a surpliced choir—an arrangement, by the way, of comparatively modern date, and not altogether acquiesced in by the congregation, who, *en masse*, while the choir were monotoning, said the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and versicles as if in protest against a piece of ecclesiasticism rather at variance with the distinctly evangelical teaching of the incumbent. With the exception of the excessive prevalence of music there was no perceptible æstheticism, except a large gilt cross on the altar and a few flowers. The hymns, from the Ancient and Modern selection, were joined in with great heartiness, and the demeanour of all present appeared far above the average of London congregations in regard of reverence and devotion.

The name of the preacher, except on abnormal occasions, is never announced beforehand at St. Peter's, Eaton Square. Hence, towards the conclusion of the ante-communion office, everyone is agog to ascertain whether Mr. Wilkinson himself will preach, or whether this important duty will devolve on one of his subordinates. Fortunately for ourselves, yesterday Mr. Wilkinson occupied his own pulpit, and never did a more striking roll of unbroken eloquence issue from his lips. He took as his text, 'King of kings and Lord of lords,' having

previously spoken a few words of almost daring sarcasm against the niggardliness of his wealthy people in refusing to contribute to his new Mission Church by Victoria Station. He had asked, he said, for four thousand pounds—not a large sum for so wealthy a parish—and he had got barely one thousand. His annoyance at this response he could not conceal, and he plainly intimated that he looked upon it as a slap in the face. . . . Mr. Wilkinson did not desire evidently to mince matters. *In limine* he gave them a bit of his mind; and he followed it up in his sermon in a style which, from a less popular man, might have proved simply suicidal, but in the case of the Eaton Square people, will no doubt work the will of the preacher. . . .

Mr. Wilkinson possesses not only a large and sympathetic voice, but also a countenance flexible, yet so firm that a harsh observer might term it obstinate. His intonation is pure; nevertheless, by a certain peculiarity of emphasising his consonants, he betrays his northern origin. This very peculiarity—like the 'mouthing' of Bishop Wilberforce—arrests attention, and it was noteworthy how eagerly the male portion of his auditory hung upon every word he uttered, those in the gallery craning forward in order to hear better. . . . The preacher descended from the pictorial and poetic to a vein of gentle satire. He took us into the City, and bade us price the value of each office and warehouse; then to the Queen's Drawing-room, and assured us that in attempting to estimate the value of the jewels and dresses, and horses and carriages, we should be lost in a labyrinth of calculation. Then, again, he bade us wander through aristocratic London during the small hours of the night, and realise what an amount in amusement alone Mammon cost. And yet, in spite of all this lavish expenditure, when he demanded a comparatively small sum for evangelising the poor at their gates, he could not get it! Here lay the gravamen, and he pressed it with all the genuine indignation of a soul which has learned to despise gewgaws and to hate hypocrisy. The sermon wound up with a few words on personal religion, having lasted, including the preface on the subject of the Mission Church, about three-quarters of an hour. It would have been no fatigue to his audience had Mr. Wilkinson continued speaking for another half-hour. There is so much of genuine grandeur in his voice, manner, and delivery; so much originality in his method, and so great depth in his matter, that an intellectual being, whether of his creed or of another, could not but derive

pleasure and profit from listening to one so highly gifted and so transcendentally in earnest.

The Right Hon. G. W. E. Russell, in his book 'Seeing and Hearing,' writes:

In the year 1870 a flame of religious zeal was suddenly kindled in the West End of London. . . .

The Church in the Belgravian district was as dry as tinder; it caught fire from Mr. Wilkinson's fervour, and the fire soon became a conflagration. . . . In all my experience of preaching (which is long, wide, and varied) I have never seen a congregation dominated by its minister so absolutely as the congregation of St. Peter's was dominated by Mr. Wilkinson. I say 'congregation' advisedly, for I should think that at least half the seatholders belonged to other parishes. The smartest carriages in London blocked the approach to the church. The great dames of Grosvenor Square and Carlton House Terrace rubbed shoulders with the opulent inhabitants of Tyburnia and South Kensington, Cabinet Ministers fought for places in the gallery, and M.P.'s were no more accounted of than silver in the days of Solomon.

And this was not a mere assemblage of hearers. The congregation of St. Peter's were pre-eminently givers: 4000*l.* a year was the regular product of the alms-bags, let alone the innumerable sums sent privately to the Vicar. 'I want a thousand pounds.' This simple but emphatic statement from the pulpit one Sunday was succeeded on the following Sunday by the quiet announcement, 'I have got a thousand pounds.' What was the secret of this attraction? It was entirely personal. It did not in the least depend on theological bias. Mr. Wilkinson belonged to no party. He had begun life as an Evangelical, and he retained the unction and fervour which were characteristic of that school at its best; but he was feeling his way towards a higher churchmanship, and had discarded most of his earlier shibboleths. The fabric was frankly hideous. . . . There was no ritualism. . . . The vicar was everything, and even he had none of the gifts which are commonly supposed to make a Popular Preacher. He was not the least flummery or flowery. He was reserved and dignified in manner, and his language was quite unadorned. . . . He was conspicuously free from the tendency to prophesy

smooth things, and he even seemed to take a delight in rubbing the pungent lotion of his spiritual satire into the sore places of the hearers' conscience. If Jeremiah had prophesied in a surplice, he would have been like the Prophet of Belgravia ; and as for Savonarola, his sermon, as paraphrased in chapter xxiv. of 'Romola,' might have been delivered, with scarcely a word altered, from the pulpit of St. Peter's.

And here we touch the pith and core of Mr. Wilkinson's preaching. He rebuked the Sins of Society as no one had ventured to rebuke them since the days of Whitefield and the Wesleys. The Tractarian Movement, so heart-searching, so conscience-stirring at Oxford, had succumbed in the fashionable parts of London to the influences which surrounded it, and had degenerated into a sort of easy-going ceremonialism—partly antiquarian, partly worldly, and wholly ineffective for spiritual revival or moral reformation. Into this Dead Sea of lethargy and formalism Mr. Wilkinson burst like a gunboat. He scattered his fire left and right, aimed high and low, blazed and bombarded without fear or favour ; sent some crafts to the bottom, set fire to others, and covered the sea with wreckage. In less metaphorical language, he rebuked the sins of all and sundry, from Duchesses to scullery-maids, Premiers to page-boys, octogenarian rakes to damsels in their teens. Then, as now, Society loved to be scolded, and the more Mr. Wilkinson thundered the more it crowded to his feet. 'Pay your bills.' 'Get up when you are called.' 'Don't stay till three at a ball and then say that you are too delicate for early services.' 'Eat one dinner a day instead of three, and try to earn that one.' 'Give up champagne for the season, and what you save on your wine merchant's bill send to the Mission Field.' 'You are sixty-five years old and have not been confirmed. Never too late to mend. Join a Confirmation Class at once, and try to remedy, by good example now, all the harm you have done your servants or your neighbours by fifty years' indifference.' 'Sell that diamond cross which you carry with you into the sin-polluted atmosphere of the Opera, give the proceeds to feed the poor, and wear the only real cross—the cross of self-discipline and self-denial.'

Here is an example of his methods :

Mr. Wilkinson had been pointing out the miserable offertories (averaging threepence a head on a Sunday morning) from

the richest congregation in London. Soon after, it may have been the following Sunday, before beginning his sermon he said he wished to read a letter he had received—that he often received letters telling him how changes, &c., were liked or disliked—that he was glad to get them from his people, but this one was anonymous, and he could not tell if it were from a parishioner or from a stranger, and that being unsigned he could not answer it in the ordinary way. He then read the letter, which was distinctly rude in tone. One passage was somewhat as follows. 'You are always asking for something. If you would only curb your restless ambition and be content with what has been done, perhaps your teachings would be listened to more carefully.' Mr. Wilkinson broke off there, and said how grateful he was to his unknown friend for pointing out his faults so clearly. If he were present he would thank him for it, but (and the letter was slapped down and the characteristic toss back of the head came, with) 'I will, however, own that here I cannot change. I *have* a restless ambition—and ever shall, please God—for my people, that they may rise, worthily, to the position to which they are called. I have a restless, boundless ambition for them, that they may be in the forefront of all good works—that this parish may give in some sort of due proportion to its prosperity—and not be content with miserable gifts often far smaller than those given by their humblest dependents. If this is a fault then I am unable to give it up—[a pause]. But I thank my unknown friend for his candour.'

There was a little touch of probably unconscious sarcasm on the words 'unknown, 'anonymous,' that conveyed a nice sense of the meanness of the anonymous attack, which I remember was much appreciated by many of the hearers.

A little anecdote will show how highly Mr. Wilkinson's preaching was appreciated. For the truth of it the author of this memoir cannot vouch; but that anyone could believe it to be true, that it should gain currency among the people of St. Peter's, is an indication of the state of feeling. The story goes that one day, after a sermon by Dr. Liddon, two people who were disappointed at not hearing the Vicar were overheard saying, 'Who was the preacher?' 'Oh, only a curate!' was the answer.

It was not to be wondered at if one so much sought after

and admired felt at times the temptation to self-complacency and to the love of power. The wonder is that he was so able to master the temptation, to recognise it for what it was and to deal with it so sternly, and to live so resolutely in the only atmosphere that could correct it. On the title-page of his diary for the first year at St. Peter's he wrote the words of warning and encouragement :

Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully.
My grace is sufficient for thee.
My strength is made perfect in weakness.
All their works they do to be seen of men.
Have faith in God.
How many you can help if you use opportunity and grow.

Here are a few extracts from the diary :

Nov. 1870.—With intervals since I came home, but especially since Holy Communion on All Saints', when I was so happy, intense depression. Was it for my sins, so many, or to try me ? God knows. He only can take it away, and with Him I leave it. Oh, He who was in the Garden knows what it is to feel utterly broken, and to see nothing but the Cross before one !

Dec. 1870.—This Advent a strange Blessing time. Whether fruit of Vauxhall or not, He knows,[1] but the Presence came, and all through Advent we felt it. Everywhere awakening of souls. Myself through it all so weak, so helpless, so sick, so sinful ; but It was there.

May 1871.—Proudly said, ' That is done with, that temptation,' when it was not.

July 1871.—Every day more dreary than preceding. Tears and weariness—only bright moment when at Holy Communion and helping people.

August 1871.—On Friday, when G. was so ill, his little hand in mine. My Father knows all ; I can trust Him. Then, his impatience, and tossing medicine away, and so becoming much worse.[2]

March 1872.—Morning taken back into His Love. New thoughts given for the sermon (as I thought), and for which I was thankful. Then came work of afternoon—self-willed with M.

[1] He took part in a parochial mission there in November.

[2] The two elder boys were taken very ill on a holiday in Switzerland.

Then the sick-visiting, where I was helped; then the address. I felt so happy . . . in it—and then at dinner X. told me how rubbishy it was. It was most rubbishy . . . and I was so unhappy. . . . Oh, is it a message, or is it merely a temptation? . . . Then X. came in at luncheon and said how every one had been touched.

July 1872.—Afraid of mistakes, and so afraid of speaking to men whom I could advise for good. . . . Ignoring the fact that I was sent by God to hold that Retreat, and so not taking my position for Him as I ought . . . At end of Retreat losing force. . . . Afraid of preaching the Gospel; hindered by thought, 'Do I believe it? Am I accepted?'

March 1873.—During this period a miserable feeling of failure after every sermon and address. No real ground for it, because God is blessing me.

May 1873.—The only comfort, that I do in a dogged way what I should do if I loved God, e.g. Prayer, &c.

July 1873.—Let me record His love. I was oh, so far away in feeling, trying to do His will, but so cold and dead! and He came and met me and loved me and taught me that He orders all things, that He is interested in what we do, that He is thinking of me; and even when I had sinned He loved me and spoke comfortably to me, and said, 'He that believeth on Me shall not be confounded.'

Not many letters appear to have been preserved that belong to the early years at St. Peter's. The number of letters that Wilkinson wrote was enormous. His diaries mention the numbers for almost every day and every week. But they were for the most part very brief, and largely about details of parochial business. There was no longer any friend, like his uncle Thomas, to whom he made a point of writing regularly and giving an account of his own life and doings. I give only a few letters of this period.

To Miss Trotter

46 Devonshire Street, Portland Place, W.: December 24 [1869].

. . . This human sympathy is given in the Christmas message, which tells us that we have not to deal merely with the Holy One who inhabits eternity, but with a dear Elder Brother

who was born as a babe in Bethlehem; . . . and thus His human sympathy calls on us to follow the example of His human life. If we look down on those who are not quite our equals, we should have despised Him and His Mother. If we hold our tongue for fear of being unpopular, we should have denied Him. Each penny we spend on dress beyond what is really necessary joins us more closely to the crowd of Jews who thronged the well-furnished chambers at Bethlehem and separates us more entirely from that poor Mother who was left to shiver in the lowly manger.

To one who had given up the intention of being ordained

62 Warwick Square, S.W.: June 7, 1870.

I hope you will forgive my writing a short note with reference to the change in your plans of which I have heard with much regret.

No one can feel more intensely than I do the solemn responsibility which is involved in being ordained. No one, I hope, would shrink more than I should from urging anyone to offer himself for Orders unadvisedly or in a light and careless spirit.

Inasmuch, however, as one class of Satan's temptations consists in leading us to doubt the reality of that help which He has promised who shed His Blood to redeem us and whose strength is made perfect in human weakness, I venture to suggest these points for your consideration:

1. Is it not a serious thing to look back after having once put your hand to the plough, as you did when you abandoned your former plans and devoted yourself to preparation for the ministry?

2. If many go into Orders carelessly, is not that a reason why those who are earnest should go forward rather than hold back?

3. When there is so great a need of Pastors, must it not grieve our Lord if those whom He has called in so clear a way as you were called leave untended the thousands on whom He has so much compassion, 'sheep without a shepherd,' wandering through this wilderness with no one to guide them to their Lord?

Forgive me for writing thus—you may have many reasons of which I am ignorant and which fully justify the step which you are about to take, but I should not feel happy without at least

expressing the pleasure which it will give me if I can be of any use to you either by talking the matter quietly over, or by joining with you in prayer to Him who as at this time sent down the Holy Ghost to guide His people and to give them a right judgment.

To the Rev. C. Green

62 Warwick Square, S.W. : Jan. 9, 1872.

Have you any reason for what you say about the sermons, or is it only a general principle ? Tell me, please, if it be the former. Your advice has always been so helpful to me, and I feel more than I can tell you the responsibility of the influence which God has given me. I know I have your prayers. He has been very good and given us a large number of definite conversions this Advent.

To Miss Trotter

62 Warwick Square, S.W. : July 3, 1870.

A short note suitable for a Saturday with three sermons looming in the Sunday future. I have two here, and one at Windmill Street at night ; so I know I shall have your prayers, as I am very tired to-day and want power for to-morrow.

. . . It is rather trying for her [Mrs. Wilkinson] just now. Everything in London goes by fashion, and it is the fashion for old ladies just now to tell her how ill, interesting, pale, &c., I look, and so—you can imagine the rest.

. . . For long it has been my continual prayer that He would guide me to do what is best as to time of going to Bishop Auckland. As life advances, the gifts which God has given cease to be regarded in any other light than that of responsibilities, and the temptation is sometimes for a moment to envy those who do not possess them. . . . The responsibility of this work is very great, and the calls to help others are many, and I think your little meeting will understand the difficulty which I feel, and the need which I have of the Holy Ghost to show me where it is right to save oneself, where to spend and be spent for Him who gave up all for us.

To the Rev. F. R. Chapman

62 Warwick Square, S.W. : Jan. 1 [? 1872].

As to the good of the association—or rather its impotence to effect any good—you may be right.[1] We are quite uncertain

[1] Archdeacon Chapman cannot now remember what this association was.

on this head, and shall readily abandon the idea, if at our earlier and smaller meetings it seems desirable to do so. One thing, however, in your letter needs a word in reply. The very object of the association, as I said in my note, was to unite men who are Churchmen but not St. Albanites. Everyone whose name was put on the list was added to that list because some personal friend told us that he did take his stand on the two principles contained in your letter :

1. The Bible teaching.

2. Primitive interpretation as against mediæval additions. If you knew Maclagan or Moorhouse or Ashwell or Prescott, you would feel that in these points they are one with you (except perhaps Moorhouse, who is not so much of a Churchman as you are).

As to the other point in your letter, no one can feel more than I do the danger which attends individual help. At the same time I think it is right to give it, and I see how those who have been for years held in Satan's power through ignorance of the Gospel can be led by individual help to receive for themselves the glad tidings, which in the Church they always considered to belong to others. I see also that individual guidance, used in a sober, cautious manner, is a help to many. Again here is a fact which cannot be ignored. For good or evil in the present day, when real spiritual earnestness is awakened in a parish or an individual, the wish for individual help almost invariably arises in a certain class of minds. If you never let your people feel that you are glad to see them privately and to give them all that their Church warrants you in offering, you send them at once to another class of teachers, who bring them into what you and I feel to be bondage. In many a parish, through the want of the offer of individual help, earnest people help their clergyman in every way, but for their own souls they come quietly to London, and are too often bound round with chains of mediævalism. I am writing against time, but you are too old and too close a friend, for me to like you to feel that you are Anglican and I Roman.

To the Misses Trotter on their Mother's death

62 Warwick Square, S.W. : March 14, 1872.

My dear Tottie and Carrie,—I write to you because I know you best—not because I do not feel for you all on this

day of bitter trial. We have been praying for you both at home and in the parish, and I know He will answer the prayers, but I know by my own experience what such a week as this is. I remember how—unable to pray—unable to realise God's love—crushed with an almost overpowering anxiety about the future—I went down the day after the funeral to Elvet Church and there, as cold as ice and hard as a stone, just knelt at the Holy Table and cast myself on Him who is God and Man—and no comfort came at the time, but as I went quietly home the light broke and the words were given me which have enabled me to help and comfort so many in similar trials.

The only hope, my dear girls, is to cling to Him without the feeling—without the power to pray or trust or love—not to look beyond the day—to resist as a temptation (and to conquer by repeating over and over some text that links you to Jesus) any suggestion as to the future and what shall be done in it. 'Day by day'—'for the day'—He gives Manna and help. When we go beyond the day we meet Satan in our own solitary weakness.

Whatever dear Mrs. Trotter's fear of death might be (which I did not know) I know how she felt the blank of being separated from your father and longed to be again with him. You know how little the feelings at the last hour avail. The worst die peacefully. The best are often most harassed. You know as I know how surely her soul was resting on her Lord—how *perfectly certain* we are that she is now with Him. So, my dear girls, do not battle in your weakness with Satan but abide in our dear Lord, saying over and over some of His tender promises—and Satan shall be tired of tempting and harassing you. The sun will arise. The beasts of the forest—Satan, the roaring lion—all shall depart, and you shall feel how near He has been who is to us indeed the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, our own crucified and risen Lord. All love to your brothers and poor Emmy and Ada, and believe me,

Ever your Friend and Pastor,

GEORGE H. WILKINSON.

CHAPTER V

THE DAY OF INTERCESSION FOR MISSIONS

WILKINSON'S interest in Foreign Missions had been of long standing when he went to Eaton Square. In his New Year's greeting to the parishioners in 1872, among other 'obvious wants' which were to be felt in the parish was that of 'more efforts in behalf of Foreign Missions.' In April of that year he began the formation of a Ladies' Missionary Association, to do needlework for the benefit of Foreign Missions—in the first instance for the Missions in Hawaii and in Zululand. The Bishop of Honolulu was present at the second meeting of the Association and addressed the ladies on the subject of his interesting work.

In the course of the previous year (1871) Wilkinson became a member of the Standing Committee of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel—and, as was to be expected of him, a very active member. The martyrdom of Bishop Patteson had recently filled the hearts of all English Churchmen with deep emotions. Wilkinson, with his more than ordinary belief in the power of prayer, proposed to the Society the appointment of a special day of intercession on behalf of Missions, and chiefly for the purpose of obtaining a larger supply of missionaries. The idea was a new one. He was anxious that the movement should not proceed from any society, but should be the movement of the English Church itself. He suggested, with this view, that after the Archbishop of Canterbury had been first approached, a letter should be addressed to all the Bishops in terms like these :

MY LORD,—I am desired by the Committee of this Society to bring before your Lordship's notice the increasing difficulty

of finding Missionaries to labour for the Church in foreign lands [state facts].

Under these circumstances I am desired to ask whether your Lordship is disposed to help us by inviting the Clergy and Laity of your Diocese to observe [one of the Ember Days or the Eve of St. Peter] as a day of special intercession to the Lord of the Harvest, beseeching Him to send forth labourers into His harvest.

We shall be thankful for any suggestions from your Lordship before the arrangements are finally made.

With the earnest hope that you may be able to accede to the request of the Committee, I have the honour to be——

On July 20 the Society adopted a Minute containing the following passages :

The Society is at present grievously pressed by the want of Missionaries for carrying on its great work of propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts. The ordinary appeal of a Missionary Society has been for funds. We ask now for men.

1. The following examples from the East alone will illustrate our wants :

(*a*) The plan formed three years ago by the Bishop of Bombay for a chain of Missions through the Mahratta country stands still for want of men. Only two of the projected stations have been occupied, and these by missionaries not sent out from England, but detached from other Missions in India which could ill spare them. . . .

(*b*) In a letter just received from the Bishop of Madras, he says, 'We can find abundance of work for three or four right-hearted Missionaries.'

(*c*) Four able Missionaries have recently been removed by death or illness from the work in Calcutta, and no successors have gone from England to take their places. . . .

(*d*) The Bishop of Colombo writes : 'It is heart-breaking to have the appeals made which come to me day by day, and to have to refuse them. The Missions are being ruined for want of men.' . . .

Nor is it only in our established Missions that this great want is felt. In regions which were long closed to the good news of salvation by Jesus Christ, e.g. in China and Japan, there is now a door opened by which we, like others, are ready to enter,

if able and devoted pioneers of the Gospel would present themselves for the work.

If we go beyond our own sphere, and inquire into the condition of other Missionary Societies, we learn that the same want is felt on every side.

Ought we not, then, with one common supplication to cast this widely felt and pressing care upon God Himself, the Lord of the Harvest? Many freely give their wealth; may not some be moved to devote to this sacred cause a nobler and more costly sacrifice—their intellectual powers, their moral weight, their Christian influence, a life like Henry Martyn's and a death like Bishop Patteson's?

2. Looking at the present state of the Heathen, we observe that after eighteen centuries during which the Gospel of our Lord has been proclaimed in the world, there are still 700 millions who have not received the message of salvation through Jesus Christ. . . .

The extension of the commerce, the arts, and the power of Christian nations has shaken the foundations of old superstitions in the hearts of those 700 millions of heathens. In India, Africa, and China, ground is broken up and prepared to receive the seed of the Word whenever the sowers go forth. In some parts the seed has been widely scattered, and, by the blessing of God, a few first-fruits have been already reaped. It would seem as if all that is needed to bring about the fulfilment of God's gracious purpose towards these people is, under His blessing, the persevering labours of an increased number of Christian Missionaries.

3. In supplicating the Lord for a supply of labourers in the Mission field, we are confident that we are asking Him according to His will. He has declared that He will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth; He has reconciled the world unto Himself by Jesus Christ; He has committed unto His Church the word of reconciliation. By His Spirit He moves the hearts of men, and makes them able ministers of the New Testament, and orders the way of His Evangelists. We are enjoined to pray to the Lord of the Harvest to send forth labourers, and we are encouraged so to pray by the fact that the choosing and sending forth of the Twelve Apostles immediately followed upon the intercession of the Disciples and their Divine Master.

Is it not still a law of the Divine government that the Lord

waits to be gracious? May He not even now be waiting for human intercession to commission the men whom He has in His own councils chosen for missionary work? May it not be with us as it was with the early Christian Church, when, under the pressure of a great spiritual need, men set themselves by an act of solemn united intercession to seek the Lord?

'As they fasted and prayed, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'

Probably not all of this Minute came from the pen of Wilkinson, but there can be little doubt of the style of the latter part of it. His paper called 'Thoughts for December 20,' reprinted from 'Mission Life,' had an immense circulation. The main heads of it were these:

1. We must be *earnest.* We must beware of a careless, half-hearted spirit. 'Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully' (marginal reading, 'negligently'); and this is, in an especial sense, the work of the Lord.

Wherever prayer is offered, Satan, we may rest assured, will not be far distant. We need not, therefore, be disheartened because of the wandering thoughts, or the dark suggestions of unbelief, with which even the most saintly souls may be harassed; but it will be evil for our own souls, and evil for the Church at large, if we are satisfied on this day with a formal, half-hearted service. . . .

2. We must be *thankful.* Let us thank God for this evidence of the deepening of spiritual life in His Church. . . . Just as the individual Christian, in proportion to his growth in grace, enters more fully into the mind of Christ, so is it with the Church at large. . . . In sympathy with her Divine Head, she stays herself upon the Word of the Living God; she obeys the laws of His Kingdom, assured that He, on His part, will not be unmindful of His covenant. While the world is considering whether prayer is really of any avail, she chants her time-honoured creed, and bids her children come and worship, and fall down and kneel before the Lord their Maker.

As we kneel, then, before the Holy Table in the early morning, let us begin our day in an Eucharistic spirit. Let us thank our God that, amid all her negligences and ignorances, our Church is still true to our ascended Lord; that in an age of God-dishonouring unbelief and degrading materialism she has still

the courage to avow her dependence upon the unseen force of the spiritual kingdom, and to profess her unwavering trust in the word of her King. . . .

3. There must be *confession of sin*. . . .

The Great Head of the Church has been looking, year after year, to see in us of the travail of His soul—waiting to gather some fruit of His vineyard. What has He seen? What sign of His love? What has England done? What have we ourselves done to discharge that parting commission? Have we not grudged the first-fruits of our wealth—the best of our sons and of our daughters? Have we not too often swelled the silly cry of a thoughtless crowd when they asked, 'To what purpose is this waste? Why have men like Mackenzie and Patteson gone out to those poor savages when there was so much to be done at home?'

4. All true confession of sin is followed by *amendment of life*.

Let old things pass away. . . . Let us rearrange our expenditure, so that a proper portion may be given to Foreign Missions. Let us offer to God, in an act of solemn surrender, the children whom He has given us, praying Him to choose which He will to be hereafter sent out as His Missionary. Let the work which lies so near to the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ occupy henceforth a foremost place in our affections and our thoughts. . . .

Two suggestions may here be offered.

(1) Let us be *definite*.

Let us realise clearly what it is which, on this day, we ask our God to give to His Church. . . . We pray for MEN!—for men of apostolic spirit—men filled with the old apostolic fire—men who shall go forth, with their lives in their hands, to witness for Christ to the uttermost parts of the earth. . . .

(2) Let us 'ask in *faith*, nothing wavering.' . . .

However the world may scoff about so-called credulity—however in our lonely hours we may have been tempted to lose heart, and to sink down appalled by the magnitude of the enterprise and the comparative failure of our missionary efforts, to-day we will arise to higher and nobler thoughts. . . .

The answer is certain; in God's own way—in God's own time. . . . It may come at once. This very day, the clerk in his counting-house, the student in our universities, the parish priest as he ministers in the congregation, may hear the voice of the Lord God saying, 'Whom shall I send?' . . . Or it may be that the answer shall be long delayed. We, who this day

have prayed, may never on earth be allowed to see the result of our supplications . . . It matters not. In the life of the world to come, if not on this side of the grave, we shall watch the reapers as they gather in the golden harvest.

The Church Missionary Society joined heartily with the older Society in promoting the observance. The Archbishops and Bishops took it up warmly. Throughout the country, and beyond its boundaries, there was a surprising response to the appeal. St. Peter's itself was thronged throughout the day. Addresses were given there by Father Benson at the early Communion, and by Mr. W. Cadman, the Evangelical Rector of Holy Trinity, Marylebone, in the afternoon, and there were four special services besides. It was a great day. The 'Times' devoted two columns next day to reporting the services held at St. Paul's, Westminster Abbey, and elsewhere. It followed the matter up by a leading article in which it expressed astonishment at the docility with which the injunctions of the authorities had been received and the people had flocked together to pray. It is worth while to read that leading article, in order to see how the tone of the public Press has changed with regard to these matters during the quarter of a century which has followed; and it must be remembered that the change of tone is largely due to the very faith and courage which was shown at the time by Wilkinson and those who joined with him.

It is idle not to recognise what everybody knows, said the 'Times.' The simple fact with regard to the Missions of the Church of England is that they occupy a very inconsiderable place in the interest and even in the information of good and zealous Church people. There really is no human enterprise possessing organisation, receiving subscriptions, and publishing 'Reports' that has so little to show for itself in the way of fruits, or in the less palpable influences with which it might be credited. . . . Who is there who can number among his personal acquaintance a man who has done some years, or a single year, of Church Missionary work, in any field? An ordinary Englishman has seen almost every human or brute native of foreign climes, but few can say that they have seen a Missionary or a Christian

convert. . . . There must be something . . . in the way, when the Missions of the Church of England are such a failure. They are a miracle that never succeeds. The rock will not flow, the rod will not blossom, the manna will not fall, the water will not divide, the iron will not swim, the myriad expectants of miraculous relief have still to bear their burdens. The very surface of the world itself is changed by material miracles, but the spiritual work that should surpass them all lags centuries in the rear.

Great scorn was poured upon the enthusiasm which set this movement on foot, undaunted by experience.

Grant that political or physical difficulties have interposed barriers hitherto. All that is of the past. The human race is convertible and to be converted. There only wants the converter, such is our Faith. It may be said there are many in the field. It may be added, too truly, that there is not a Church, or a Denomination, or a body of Christians known by no specific name, that has not more success than the Anglican Church. Wherever it goes, it seems to work in fetters, and as if it was a performance to be done and not a work to be accomplished and a harvest to be gathered in.

Finally the article adopted a patronising attitude and offered good advice to the poor Church of England:

Are we saying this to discourage? Nay; rather to tell our good people that if they have not succeeded hitherto, they may yet succeed in other ways. There has hitherto been a certain stiffness—woodenness, one may say—in the methods employed for a work which, of all works, ought to be quite clear of other trammels than those of utility and truth. We see no reason why our missionaries should give up any race or any region as inaccessible. The Church of England, so far as we understand, does utterly give up large regions, on the ground that in tropical climates there will be either polygamy or an equivalent disregard of marriage ties, and that no preaching can ever prevail against it. . . . The Church of England has its effect, and its mission, upon certain forms of character, certain classes, certain social conditions. Other Churches and communities have like special successes on their own grounds. . . . We cannot, or do not, convert our own people. They spread themselves

over the world, following everywhere the bent of their own nature, doing their own will, following their own gain—too generally doing and being nothing that a heathen will recognise as better than himself. These preach something and have their own mischievous mission. They preach irreligion and the views that go with it. Their Gospel does its work and reaps its fruit. How can a feeble missionary, who would too often be thought but a poor creature at home with every advantage in his favour, hope to stem with a few phrases the torrent of profligacy he finds already in possession of the ground? The great work is to convert our masses at home. When they are converted, our few missionaries, scattered here and there, will find their race and language a help to them instead of a difficulty and a shame.

Such a challenge as this was likely to draw Wilkinson out, and the next Sunday morning, December 22, he preached upon the subject at St. Peter's. He had among his hearers a most distinguished critic, not greatly prejudiced in his favour, who left on record the impressions that he made. Matthew Arnold wrote to his mother on the Monday:

Yesterday morning I went down to Belgravia and heard Wilkinson; he is a very powerful preacher from his being himself so *possessed*. But it was a very striking sermon—on missions and the 'Times' article upon them. The notion was that we are corrupting here from over-vitality, too much life crowded up in too narrow a room, and that the best remedy was to return to the old Gospel injunction—go and preach the Gospel to every creature. This was in answer to the common objection—begin with your heathen masses at home. He despaired of home, he said; he had at first thought it was the right place to begin, but he now saw it to be the will of God that it was not so; and then came pictures of the life of the poor in London, and of 'Society' in London, and of the Church of England, all fermenting and corrupting, he said, from too much vitality being jammed up together in too narrow a space; the only remedy was to disperse into missions. We ought all to wish to go, and to bring up our children to wish to go. His triumph was when he met the natural question—why don't *you* go, then? He had wished to go, he said, prayed to go; he still hoped to go, but was not yet suffered; he thought it was because of the sins of his youth

and that he was not found worthy; and he compared himself to Moses not allowed because of his faults to enter the Holy Land himself, only permitted to send Joshua. You see what awful risk he ran here of being unreal, even absurd; and he came out triumphant. He was so evidently sincere, more than sincere, burnt up with sorrow, that he carried everyone with him, and half the church was in tears. I do not much believe in good being done by a man unless he can give *light*, and Wilkinson's fire is very turbid; but his power of heating, penetrating, and agitating is extraordinary. He has no merit of voice; only one tone, a loud and clear, but rather harsh one.[1]

Now that the Day of Intercession is an annual occurrence, it passes by without a remark, and, as is the way with human things, not much is expected of it, and perhaps not much obtained. But it was otherwise with that first Day. Its effect was everywhere felt, and it still continues to be felt. Men have given themselves to missionary work at the Pan-Anglican Congress of 1908 who first offered in 1872 and were then debarred from going. At St. Peter's, Eaton Square, itself, two out of the four curates at once offered themselves. It is said that five clergymen in all, connected with the parish, were prepared to go at once. One, the Rev. C. P. Scott, went out to Chefoo in 1874, and will justly be regarded in history as the apostle and founder of the Church in Northern China. Another, the Rev. Arthur Williamson, also offered to go, and the matter was laid before the Bishop of London early in 1873. One of his brothers was already a missionary, and as the parents were reluctant to part with another son, the Bishop's counsel was that it would be well in this case to follow the leading of the Fifth Commandment, and that Mr. Williamson should continue his useful work at St. Peter's.

At the beginning of 1873, on January 10, the Vicar unfolded the plan of a Missionary Guild, comprising both men and women desirous to aid in the extension of Christ's Kingdom by systematically praying, giving, or doing any description of work for the cause. Its object was defined as being 'to express, to exercise,

[1] *Letters of Matthew Arnold* (ed. 1901), vol. ii. p. 102.

and to develop the fresh interest in Foreign Missions which God aroused among us, in answer to the prayers of December 20, 1872.'

This Guild became one of the most important parts of the great work at St. Peter's. Miss Pennant gives the following account of its early days.

Mr. Wilkinson had not been Vicar of St. Peter's more than two years before he endeavoured to enlist his people's interest in Foreign Mission work. This was by no means easy, but he spared no pains to effect this very earnest desire of his heart. A ladies' work party was started in April 1872—held fortnightly, when the Vicar from time to time gave short addresses on Missions abroad, or brought a missionary to address the party on his work. The Vicar explained the object of the work party, and constantly invited others to join it; the duties were to pray daily for Foreign Mission work and show some practical interest by taking home the work to be done, or by subscribing to the fund. Still very little real interest was developed. The Vicar then tried by advertising to find some clergyman who would work for a time in his parish, and enlist the interest of the parishioners, and then go out strengthened by their prayers, and supported by their alms, to work in India or elsewhere, in connexion with the S.P.G. This also does not appear to have answered; though for a short time interest was shown towards the Kishnagar Mission, it was not taken up by the Parish.

A day of Intercessions for an increased supply of Missionaries was suggested through the S.P.G. Society with the hearty approval of the Archbishop of Canterbury. This day was fixed for Dec. 20, 1872. It was a memorable day in the English Church. The Vicar of St. Peter's took an important part in it; indeed, the suggestion of the day being set apart, though not then known, was from him, and it was cordially taken up by all the Church.

Amongst the clergy of St. Peter's was one who had three or four years before joined the staff, Charles Perry Scott. He himself in a letter recently received from Peking describes his going thirty-seven years ago, into the grim old vestry of St. Peter's, Eaton Square, a chill November evening, a shy, young, prospective curate to see the Vicar, who grasped him by the hand and welcomed him with a smile never to be forgotten.

This young curate was one who offered for Mission Work on that memorable day. Those who were present at the evening service and heard him read were sure the call had come to him. Two years later Mr. Scott went out as Missionary to North China in connexion with the S.P.G. He went out taking with him the deepest interest and sympathy from the congregation of St. Peter's, who gave him many tokens of their love and esteem, and were full of regret at his work at St. Peter's being brought to a close.

The Vicar now had his heart's desire fulfilled, his prayers were answered, and the farewell address to his young curate on St. Peter's Day, 1874, from 2 Timothy ii. 1, 'Thou, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, &c.' was full of deep thankfulness, also of sincere sorrow at losing him, which brought tears to many eyes.

There was then no longer any difficulty in interesting the congregation of St. Peter's in foreign work.

The Missionary Guild held its first admission for members, including men and women, on Nov. 19, 1874, when ninety-four persons were admitted, and a second admission was held shortly after. Miss Caroline Philips, a very devoted worker at St. Peter's, was appointed by the Vicar secretary in charge of the guild, and she continued her work with faithful zeal most unremittingly until her health, two years before her death, obliged her to resign in 1902. Mrs. Ricardo was then selected to take her place, and works in the same zealous way as her predecessor. It is greatly owing to the energy and interest of these two ladies, who for over thirty-three years have, under the chaplain, the Rev. A. Fairbanks, had charge of the working of the Guild, that it has been kept in such admirable order. The Guild now numbers 306 members.

It is not easy to record here, as these few lines are only a brief sketch of the early days of the Missionary Guild, how many successively gave up their lives for foreign work, men and women. One name must not be left out—Cecile Isherwood, a member of the Guild who at her confirmation offered herself for mission work, and at the early age of twenty-one sailed for Grahamstown, where she became, under Bishop Webb, head of his Sisterhood, and is well known and dearly loved by the Guild as Mother Cecile. Her name is very greatly honoured in connexion with the education of schoolmistresses for South Africa, to which work she devoted her life. The work lives on in

her Community under the sisters she drew together and educated, and has increased and prospered since her death in a marvellous manner—under Mother Florence, her successor, who went out with Sister Cecile to South Africa in very early days of her work there.

The obligations of membership were not allowed to become purely formal, and occasionally the Vicar would send round to the members a circular like the following :

I shall be much obliged if you will quietly read over the Rules of the Guild, and consider whether you are honestly, as in God's sight, trying to observe them. *If this is not the case,* will you let me know as soon as you can ? I ask for no details ; I only wish that you should tell me that you have failed, and intend, by God's help, to do better for the future. Please put ' Missionary Guild ' on the envelope of your letter, the contents of which will not be known to any one but myself.

When in 1896 Bishop Wilkinson returned to address the Guild, there were six Bishops belonging to it, the Bishops of North China, Newfoundland, South Tokyo, Corea, Cape Town (Coadjutor), Algoma—twelve priests, eight Sisters, and five other members at work abroad. The money which had been collected by it and sent to various Missions amounted to 920*l.* Miss Pennant wrote that the members had kept fairly steady, and numbered about 400 ; many had left, some had died, but others had come in. Sixty of the original members still belonged to it. Among those who had died at work abroad was Mr. Wyche, who laboured with Wilkinson in Windmill Street as well as in Eaton Square, and was drowned while crossing a river in South Africa three years after he went out.

I think, wrote the priest in charge of the Guild on the same occasion, we may be very thankful for the steady maintenance both of members and contributions. , . . What I most desire that you should quicken in us is the *faith,* and strong loyalty which kindles enthusiasm—to get back some of the old *fire* about missionary work through the rank and file of the Guild.

It was not often that Wilkinson wrote to the papers, but the following letter shows how indignantly he felt the way in which missionary work was put in an inferior place.

To the Editor of 'Church Bells'

St. Peter's Vicarage, Grosvenor Gardens, S.W. [Sept. 1873].

Sir,—I find that the paragraph in last week's 'Church Bells' with reference to the Capetown Bishopric [1] has been misunderstood, as implying that the work of the Church at home is more important than that which our Lord has entrusted to her in foreign lands. This is, I am sure, far from the meaning of the Editor.

I am glad, however, of the opportunity of pressing upon all the readers of your paper the duty of earnestly contending for the principles which were set forth on the Day of Intercession in December 1872.

The greater our difficulties at home, the more important it is that we should be directed by Him who alone can order aright our unruly wills and affections. We can only expect that heavenly guidance so far as we endeavour to walk in the way of His commandments. The command of our King as to Mission work is clear and decisive.

As He ascended into heaven, He proclaimed for all time the condition on which her high privileges were entrusted to the Church which He had redeemed with His precious Blood—'Ye shall be witnesses unto Me . . . unto the uttermost part of the earth.' Any branch of the Church, however prosperous in other respects, which, faithless to her high calling, elects to sit at ease, must sooner or later earn the wages of her self-seeking in diminished power and blessing at home.

'There is that scattereth and yet increaseth. There is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to penury.' The grains of wheat which, sown with an ungrudging hand in the great world-field, would have brought forth fruit a hundredfold, become corrupt when hoarded in the heated atmosphere of the home granary.

Is it not possible that in all our party spirit and feverish unrest we are suffering for our selfish indifference to the law of

[1] The Church at home had been congratulated on the fact that Mr. Walsham How, to whom the Bishopric of Capetown had been offered, was to remain in England.

our Divine Founder, 'Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature?' Is it not sad, that while we send forth with an ungrudging hand our best and noblest to conquer some fresh territory, or open some new ports to our commerce, Christian men can speak as if high intellectual attainments were wasted when devoted to the service of Christ, and spent in winning some far off continent for our crucified and ascended King?

Not only in the interests of the Church abroad, but for the sake of the Church at home, may God help us ever to witness against this shortsighted selfishness.

GEORGE H. WILKINSON.

CHAPTER VI

THE LONDON MISSION; CONFESSION

In the year 1873 Wilkinson preached a course of six sermons in St. Paul's Cathedral on the Tuesday evenings in Lent. His wife wrote to her aunt, Lady Grey:

2 Grosvenor Gardens, S.W. [April 16, 1873].

We are all well, I am thankful to say. God has been good to us in answering prayer. G. H.'s strength has been upheld in a most marvellous manner. I so feared he would break down before Lent was over. His work has been unceasing from early morning till late at night. But oh, the work has been so wonderfully blessed. So many souls have been brought to God this Lent. One can't feel half thankful enough. The crowds every time he preached were tremendous. Every Tuesday night the whole nave of St. Paul's Cathedral was so full that at the last two services people were standing. He preached one hour and five minutes nearly every time, and you could have heard a pin drop whenever he paused, and he was heard by people standing against the West door. I am told that even the *men* here and there were seen crying, and then, when all on their knees chanted the 51st Psalm after the sermon—it was almost overpowering. I shall, I hope, never forget those services. Is it not good of God to give him such help and strength? I know you will thank Him. He is looking very ill, but he is very happy, and sleeps much better. I am not unhappy about him when he sleeps. I do not agree with Mr. Bouverie that a clergyman should think first of his wife and children. He should, I think, think of them last. God never leaves or forsakes those who trust in Him, and this world is really only such a journey, our real life is so completely in the next world, [that] not to put God and His work first in this world would be like a man spending the whole of his fortune on the enjoyment of a three months' tour abroad and leaving himself penniless for the rest of his life. People never tell an officer

to think first of his home when he is ordered out on duty, so I don't know why a clergyman should be a coward when his duty calls him. If it is considered glorious to die for one's country, it is surely much more glorious to die for one's God. With all my heart and soul I pray God may spare my darling husband, but I would not hinder his work of saving souls from being in hell for eternity because I hoped to have ten years more happiness in this world. St. Peter was a married man, but he seems not to have first considered his wife when he really started on God's side, and the Holy Spirit was given to him. Did I tell you that Constance is probably going to Switzerland and Italy with the Vernons ? I shall miss her very much, she is such a darling good child, but I cannot refuse her to them, they are so devoted to her, and Agnes does not like the idea of going without her.

That summer, the Rev. Robert Aitken, the father of our modern Missions, fell dead on the platform of the station at Paddington. His son, who was on terms of deep and intimate affection with Wilkinson, and often preached at St. Peter's, says of the vicar :

He had the greatest respect and regard for my dear father, and indirectly I believe he was somewhat indebted to him for that clear grasp of Evangelical truth which was, after all, at the bottom of his religious convictions. He had, I believe, in early life come into contact with men who had been influenced by my dear father. I don't think that he had ever seen my father, but I believe that some correspondence passed between them. At any rate his friend Maclagan was much impressed by his intercourse with my father, and so through him Wilkinson felt almost as if he knew him. I remember his saying to me long years afterwards, when he was Bishop of Truro, 'Whenever things seem to be going a bit well with us in this diocese, I always think of those long hours of intercession spent in Pendeen Church by your dear father, and feel that the answer is coming.'

To the Rev. W. H. M. H. Aitken

2 Grosvenor Gardens, S.W. : July 22, 1873.

My dearest Willie,—I have delayed to write, hoping to be able to send a long letter. I should have gone over to you at Paddington, but the only hour that I could get away was the

one when Miss Young told me you were engaged. My heart has so felt for you. My own father was taken in a second, and I shall never forget what that week was to me. The utter desolation—I almost shudder now as I recall it. And yet what joy for the dear old man, to pass to His Lord without pain or suffering! What an *abundant* entrance it is, with him, into the Kingdom! What a happy retrospect for you all, as you see the work which he has done and the influence which he has exercised for our Lord! Let me have a line, when you can bear the trouble, to say how you are. I and many of my people have been continually thinking of you and your Mother.

With all love I am, my dearest friend,

Ever your affect.

GEORGE H. WILKINSON.

The year 1874 was memorable as that in which the first General Mission in London took place. It will be remembered that after the Twelve Days Mission in 1869 the hope was expressed that a similar effort on a larger scale might be made in 1871. For various reasons this date was found impossible; but the Mission was held three years later, beginning with Sunday, February 8, which was Sexagesima Sunday. The three Bishops then holding jurisdiction in the metropolitan area put forth a joint letter in May 1873, inviting their clergy to take part in it—by intercession, if not by having Missions in their own parishes. The Archbishop of Canterbury wrote in the same sense. Month by month, from June to January, the letter of the Bishops was reprinted in the successive numbers of the St. Peter's Magazine.

Wilkinson spoke at the Conference which was held in the theatre of King's College on November 4, after the solemn addresses of the three Bishops in St. Paul's. He preached at St. Paul's at the close of the Mission. But his most tangible contribution to this Mission at large was the publication of the little book, 'Suggestions for a Mission, based on several years' Practical Experience, by Two Parish Priests,' namely himself and Mr. Herbert of Vauxhall. The little book has been sold by many thousands. It begins by defining what a Mission is—'the special means under the Holy Spirit, for the conversion of the

sinner, the godless, and the formalist, from sin, unbelief, and dead works, to the Service of the Living God. Its one aim is to win souls.' It warns those who conduct or employ it that

no blessing can be expected if, in adopting the instrumentality, and borrowing the phraseology, of the mission in order to obtain its desired results, the soul continues to shrink from that personal wrestling whereby it may first obtain a Blessing for itself. He, therefore, who has the care of souls, before he can effectually preach Pardon through the Precious Blood, and exhort those who cannot quiet their own consciences to come to him, must himself know what is meant by Peace, and be able, by the power of Christ crucified, to help souls to pass from a state of Condemnation into a state of Reconciliation with God.

To his own parishioners, early in the year 1874, Wilkinson sent a circular letter inviting their co-operation. He spoke of the way in which from the foundation of the world God had at certain seasons sent His messages to the world.

The same God now sends a message to London. He appeals to this great city not by private individuals, but by the voice of its chief pastors in the most public and solemn manner that it is possible to conceive. Five years ago the idea was suggested to our Bishops. Calmly they waited till they were satisfied that the work was from God. Then, as His instruments, speaking in His name, they addressed to their clergy a letter recommending the Mission, and in November last they gathered them together in the cathedral and solemnly commended them to the grace of God for the work to which He had called them.

The ways in which this co-operation can be given are manifold. I ask you :

1. To pray earnestly for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
2. To offer yourselves as workers in the Mission.
3. To arrange your time, if possible, so as to go up to God's House at least every evening, for the special Mission service, which will be held about eight o'clock.
4. To arrange, so far as is practicable, that your servants, underservants, and workpeople may be able to attend some of the various services.
5. To strive earnestly during the ten days to realise the presence of God ; to avoid all unnecessary contact with the world ;

to carry with you into your daily work the thought that the eye of the Lord is upon you; that to you the power has been given of hindering or furthering the purpose of the Eternal God.

God only knows the reason why He has granted a Mission at this special time.

It may be for the sake of His own people, that they may be delivered from the degrading influence of a self-pleasing age.

It may be for the sake of the thousands whom Satan has bound with the hard fetters of drunkenness and impurity and unbelief and avowed ungodliness—the poor lost ones whom the Good Shepherd's eye has marked, wandering away from the fold of their Baptism on the dark and lonely mountains.

It may be that we have arrived at the turning point of our national history; that for the last time He who wept over Jerusalem is saying to our own Fatherland, 'Behold, I set before thee this day life and death; therefore choose life.'

It may be that the all-loving Father has prepared the hearts of His people to intercede as they interceded in the upper room at Jerusalem, in order that, in answer to the prayers which He has Himself inspired, He may grant to our Church a baptism of fire, that in the power of that Pentecostal outpouring she may go forth to the uttermost parts of the earth to prepare the way for the Advent of her King.

The paper ended with a solemn appeal to make good use of the opportunity. Untiring preparations were made at St. Peter's for the Mission.

From October 31 onwards a weekly conference of the clergy of the parish was held, and careful minutes were kept of all details of arrangement. On January 30 these meetings began to be held every day, and so continued till the end of the Mission. Nothing was left to chance or to the inspiration of the moment; all minutiæ were thought out and noted down.

Mrs. Wilkinson to Lady Grey

2 Grosvenor Gardens, S.W.: Feb. 3 [1874].

I am sure I shall have no time to write next week. The Mission will take all the time and strength we have. . . . All the gentlemen and ladies in the Parish have been visited by

some one. Those who have friends among the workers have been visited, and the papers about the Mission taken to them by these friends. The others, the clergy have visited. In most cases they have been well received.

In this Parish the higher classes are beginning to understand that God cares for their souls as well as for 'the poor.' Poor George is working so terribly hard both by day and by night that I cannot expect to see him well. God grant his strength may hold out.

I have bronchitis but am better to-day. We are to have open house for food for all the clergy from eight in the morning until nine at night during the Mission, and yet all the servants are to go to church every day. So I must sharpen my wits to manage.

A whole posse of old friends was present to help in dealing with souls, and to give the benefit of their prayers—Mr. Moore, Mr. Green, Mr. Myers, Mr. Collingwood of Southwick, Mr. G. A. Robins of Bishopstone, Mr. H. C. Ripley of Minster Lovell, Mr. Montagu Hankey of Maiden Newton, Mr. Tyrwhitt-Drake of Great Gaddesden, Mr. Thomas Morison of Kirby Underdale.

Wilkinson did not on this occasion, as on former occasions, take a large public part in the Mission himself. The main work of it was entrusted to his friend, Mr. Bodington, while a course of addresses was also given by the Earl of Mulgrave, now Marquis of Normanby.

It was a fruitful, but quiet Mission, attracting little attention from the newspapers of the day.

Mrs. Wilkinson to Lady Grey

2 Grosvenor Gardens, S.W.: Feb. 26 [1874].

The Mission has indeed been a great blessing to hundreds. I cannot give a very good account of G. H. He is terribly overdone. The Mission has brought so much extra work and then Lent at the top of it is unfortunate. . . . I had a nasty attack of bronchitis just before the Mission, which left me weak. I overdid myself terribly—half way through the week a most fearful pain in my face came on. I worked on just the same—was in church till after 11 every night, and then came

home and *ran* about the room in an agony half the night. . . . But I am glad to say I have plenty of pluck still in my old age—for after all this, at 7 o'clock I came down and gave the men their dinner, went to church at 8 and remained there until 11 and came home and gave the men their supper as usual. . . .

I know you will be glad about my cabmen. Several of them promised to come on this same Sunday evening to St. John's church (our new church). I went to Colonel Pearson, the head of our police, and got his leave for me to have a stand of cabs in Wilton Road for the evening, and to allow a water man to take charge of the empty cabs. He gave leave and arranged all for me with the police (for a cabman may be taken up if not with his cab, and no stand is allowed without leave of the police). Sixteen men gave up one hour's fare each and came. I don't know when I felt such joy, as when the dear men all of their own accord drew up before the Vicarage and insisted upon my getting into the first cab and we all went down in procession to St. John's. G. H. gave the address as only G. H. can give addresses. Many of the men were deeply touched, and next Sunday two pews behind mine were full of cabmen, and several more have joined Carrie Trotter's class. God *is* good in answering our prayers ; for much prayer from several people and at our prayer meeting had been offered up for these cabmen.

To one result of the Mission Wilkinson alludes in a letter to the missioner, written many years after from Scotland.

March 26, 1897.

Amongst many blessings which I owe to you few are greater than the wish you expressed after your St. Peter's Mission, that I should begin daily celebration. It was indeed a blessed help in many dark and difficult hours, and my experience there made me begin it as soon as the cathedral at Truro was consecrated.

But another result of the Mission was of a more troublesome character. The report was spread about—no one knows how it arose—not only that Confession had been urged upon the people, but that it had been urged in a particularly disagreeable way. It was said that ' when the gas was lowered, the clergy went about and urged the people who remained to go to

Confession.' It even reached the Bishop of London. He had occasion to write to Wilkinson about something else; and like the frank and true-hearted man that he was, he added to his letter (February 25, 1874):

I ought perhaps to confess that I was made very sad and anxious by what professed to be a trustworthy report, or rather description, of a sermon preached by you on Confession and Absolution on the evening of the last Sunday in the Mission week; but as I heard nothing more, I have set it down among the singular misconceptions which even educated people contrive to form of our utterances. I only mention it because I do not like even to *have* felt anything of the sort about you and not to tell you.

The 'sermon' of which the Bishop had heard was nothing more than an explanation of a printed paper which had been placed about in the church. Amongst other forms to be filled up at need (such as 'I shall be glad to join a Bible Class after the Mission. Name Address . This should be put into the box in the Church Porch') was one on which it was said 'I should like to see one of the clergy between and o'clock. Name Address . This paper can be either given to one of the clergy at the door, or sent in an envelope to the Vicar, St. Peter's Vestry, Eaton Square.'

Kind friends wrote to Wilkinson in grief. Anonymous letters poured in upon him. One lady wrote to say that a friend had told her that she had a daughter of sixteen, whom she wished to have prepared for the next confirmation, but that if she was to be taught to go to Confession, she would rather send her to any church than St. Peter's. The beloved and revered clergyman of a neighbouring church wrote to say that he was 'bowed down with grief'; an eminent parishioner of St. Peter's had come to ask for a seat at the writer's church, because 'very sadly he told me that you had done that very thing which our Bishops, whom you so touchingly commended as before God in St. Paul's this morning, besought us not to do.' A distinguished parishioner, who did not deny that the Prayer

Book contemplated some kind of occasional, though not habitual Confession, said :

The announcement sounded to me like a bomb shell thrown among your congregation ; but by comparison with the wider influences of the proceeding, this is a matter of minor importance, for as secessions take place, they will be supplied by equivalent accessions of persons holding the new opinions, so that your congregation will rapidly again become homogeneous—but oh ! upon how different a footing from that upon which my dear wife and myself joined your congregation and believing in the integrity of which [*sic*] she died.

Another distinguished man, who said that no such explanation as had been given had been needful for himself, and that the explanation given had completely satisfied him, urged that the explanation should be repeated, because he saw how necessary it was among his own immediate circle, and added :

By chance too I have the means of knowing, and I do know, that in the highest quarters—I mean at Windsor—your attitude on this matter is misunderstood. This fact, I well know, would not be more material to you than a misunderstanding by any other person—but in one way you will I think see that it is more material—namely, because impressions in such quarters, correct or mistaken, do obtain a wider circulation than when they are held elsewhere.

Perhaps it may be said in passing that Wilkinson had been invited to preach before the Queen at Windsor in 1871, and before the Prince of Wales at Sandringham both in 1871 and in 1873.

It was during Lent, says a friend, that he went to Windsor the first time, and I have heard that the sermon he took was one which he had preached to his own people on the preceding Ash Wednesday, in which very plain language was used about some of the follies of fashionable life, and especially as regards dress. His royal hearer is reported to have said afterwards to old Dean Wellesley, ' What had all this to do with me ? '

The sermon was, as a matter of fact, on the need of what the preacher called ' Drawing-Room District Visitors,' the text

being Haggai i. 5, 'Consider your ways'; and certainly to some words of it the good Queen could never have taken objection.

One of England's greatest needs in the present day, he said, is a band of District Visitors for her drawing-rooms; earnest Christian men and women, using their knowledge of Society for Christ and His Church—who will live *in* the world, and yet be *above* the world; who will sympathise with the joys no less than the sorrows of those amongst whom their lot is cast; full of interest in the innocent pleasures of the young and light-hearted, but at the same time 'strong in the Lord and in the power of His might;' strong to take advantage of any opportunity of acknowledging their Saviour and their King; strong to check at once, by a gentle remonstrance, or a silence more eloquent than words, everything which is opposed to the mind of Him to Whom their own heart has been surrendered; strong with the strength which has been gained by earnest prayer and silent meditation in the Presence of their God.

Such have I seen, in that London world—may God multiply them a hundredfold in the quiet of these Lenten Weeks.

Once again, says the same friend, after some interval, she was induced to command his appearance in the pulpit of her private chapel, when he took for his text, 'Be sure your sin will find you out.' Somehow this came to my knowledge, and when we next met, I ventured to ask what had possessed him to take such a subject. His answer was immediate and explicit, 'Because I felt it was my last chance, and I must make the best use of it.' This best use, in his view, was to set plainly before the Queen—just as plainly as in old days before the miners at Sandypond—the evangelical view of sin and salvation.

It may not be out of place to add that he chose the same text the last time that he preached, as Primus of Scotland, in the height of the May term, before the University of Cambridge—drawing from the genial and plain-speaking layman who was then Vice-Chancellor the remark, 'When a man speaks out just what he has got in his heart, it does good.'

The first of the two sermons at Sandringham was preached in pathetic circumstances, as the following letter shows:

From the Hon. Mrs. William Grey to a friend

Sandringham : Sunday.

The day after the little Prince's death, the Prince of Wales wrote me a very kind letter to say that the Princess wished me to come here as soon as I could. I arrived here only a few days ago, and found *her* much better in health than I had expected, but still very low and upset about the loss of the baby.

To-day we have had *the* most beautiful sermon I ever heard, by Mr. Wilkinson, whom the Prince had asked to come down. The way he touched upon the loss of the child, sent by God as a token of love, and to lead the parents' thoughts and life upwards, and to lead them the right way to Heaven, was most touching, and made a deep impression upon everybody, and the Prince was much pleased and only regretted the sermon being too short.

To return to the subject of Confession. Wilkinson was no respecter of persons, and he was not to be put off from saying or doing what he believed to be right by fear of consequences ; but he was tenderly sensitive for the feelings of those who attended his ministry. He could not bear to think of his whole congregation being upset. He consulted the venerable Lord Chelmsford upon the matter. Lord Chelmsford, who was himself a good deal troubled, wrote to him :

I think it might be as well for your own satisfaction (whatever may be your own conviction on the subject) to obtain from the Clergy who assisted you in the Mission as well as from your own Curates a clear and unequivocal denial from one and all of them that they upon no occasion [*sic*] urged anyone to confess. I say this because I have heard it asserted in more than one quarter that this was done, and I am satisfied from what you say that there has been some serious mistake upon this subject. A positive assertion contrary to the truth can only be properly met by an equally positive denial, and I think you ought to be armed to meet any repetition of the unfounded imputation.

Wilkinson then wrote to Mr. Bodington, who replied : ' Dust often flies about when the house is swept,' and urged

him to 'stand up to these roarings of the lion, with that bold courageous front,' he said, 'which you know how to show,' and,' like as the smoke vanisheth, so shalt thou drive them away.' But Mr. Bodington sent along with this private letter a plain and sensible statement, that might be shown to anyone whom it might concern.

I give you my word, he said in the course of it, for those who are disturbed by this report in the parish that no pressure was to the best of my knowledge put upon any to bring them to confession. . . . All persons who remained at the After Meetings in the Mission remained, we supposed, for some purpose, and the object the clergy had in going round from pew to pew was to ascertain what that purpose was, and to offer assistance to those who needed it. It certainly was not to urge all who remained to go to confession.

Each of the friends who had come to help in the Mission made a similar statement. Five out of the six assistant curates jointly did the like; the sixth adopted a different form.

These letters were sent to Lord Chelmsford. His affection and veneration for his Vicar were deep and sincere; but he was not at all satisfied with the answers of the other clergy. He wrote back (March 10) giving his own views on the Prayer Book teaching about Absolution, and said:

I gather from all of [the answers] that the clergymen invited—I will not say confession to—but communication with them. Now it must be admitted that the line is very narrow between an 'invitation' and a 'suggestion,' and between 'confession' and 'opening a grief.' Now, almost all the letters use the precise word 'confession' or 'confessed.' These words have acquired a precise and technical meaning, and in that sense must, I suppose, be understood. All your Curates deny that they advised or suggested 'confession.' One clergyman says that he never directly or indirectly suggested the 'Confessional,' another that he never mentioned the word 'confession' directly or indirectly. Mr. Bodington says . . . that when the Clergy went round from pew to pew . . . it certainly was not to urge *all* who remained *to go to confession*. To this I must say that after such a general invitation as Mr. Bodington gave,

followed up by a particular application from pew to pew, I cannot understand what was intended except to encourage persons to open any grief which might be pressing upon their souls, which, by whatever name it may be called, is admitted by Mr. Bodington himself to be an invitation to an act of *private confession and absolution*. After carefully considering the tenor of these letters I cannot bring my mind to any other conclusion than the painful one that private confession to be followed by absolution, if not suggested, or pressed, or enforced as a duty, has been invited and encouraged, and, I may add, recommended as a practice. I regret (the writer went on to say) that any difference of opinion should exist between us on this subject of the discipline of the Church, yet be assured that this difference will not diminish in the least degree my high estimation of your character, nor the deep sense of the obligation which I, in common with the other parishioners, am under to you for all the good resulting from your ministration in the Parish. As I am satisfied that no opinion of yours has ever been or ever will be maintained except upon your conscientious conviction of its truth, and as the sentiments contained in this letter are not those of a day, but are the result of long and anxious thought, I feel that our difference upon the subject is irreconcileable. Yet I am not the less on this account

Yours sincerely,
CHELMSFORD.

Meetings, meanwhile, were being held, and the burning question discussed. One such meeting, at least, Wilkinson himself attended, at Lord Chelmsford's house. An influential layman wrote to Wilkinson, saying :

You asked us prayerfully to consider the future, and I have ; prayerfully I write this. I earnestly trust you may be inclined *without delay* to commit to *print* a clear full exposition of your interpretation of what the Prayer Book teaches. I ask it not for the sake only of the peace of mind of your congregation but for the Church of England—most solemnly I do. . . . It is not the *truth* your people and thousands of other dismayed Churchmen are stumbling at here, but they have been sent a strong delusion and they believe a lie.

Can you allow this to continue ? Did God appoint you to suffer your people to be misled, when a few quiet words from you,

such as you have preached before, would show them His truth ? I think not. . . . The Church is harassed ; this is a crisis not only for St. Peter's but for the English Church, and God grant she may come out of the fire purified. But that will not happen if her priests stand aside and let Satan sow his lying seed of misrepresentation and discord. Up and conquer him with the whole truth of God's teaching. I do believe that you owe it as your duty to the Church in which you are ordained.

If he had hesitated before, there was no resisting such an appeal as this. Without loss of time, on Sunday morning, March 15, 1874, Wilkinson preached a sermon on *Confession*, and the following Sunday morning on *Absolution*. Immediately after delivery they were printed and published, and sold by thousands all over England.

The sermon on Confession began by a repudiation of the Roman system of the Confessional, or of anything which robs Christians of the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and a recognition of the responsibility of the individual conscience. It then proceeded to show that from the beginning the confession of sin by man to man has been authorised by the Almighty. It traced rapidly the history of penitential discipline to the Reformation. With a brief allusion to the passages in the Prayer Book which touch upon the subject, the preacher went on to speak of the *motives* which were leading Englishmen to confession. 'Observe,' he said, 'I am neither approving nor condemning these motives. I am simply bringing before you certain matters of fact on which it is right that you should be thoroughly informed.' Leaving out of sight the desire for Absolution, which was to be dealt with in the next sermon, he said that some are drawn to confession in order to humble themselves, and, feeling the good opinion of others unbearable, desire for once at any rate to be real ; others wish to anticipate the shame of the Judgment ; others want sympathy and help. He then proceeded to state the principles by which he was himself guided in such cases.

I cannot ignore, he said, a truth which the Bible has revealed, and which the Church has entrusted to my care. . . . If

I know—as I do know—that many are unable to quiet their own consciences; that some are disquieted as to whether their repentance is real, and others are disturbed as to whether their sins are washed away in the Precious Blood; if I am desired, whenever I give notice of Holy Communion, to invite any who cannot quiet their own conscience, to come to me; if, in the case of the dying, I am bound, not merely to offer this help, but to *move* the sick man to make a special confession, if he feel his conscience troubled by any weighty matter; if I believe from my heart—as I do believe—that my Church is a true Branch of the true Church; . . . if I have seen—as I have seen—the blessing which has followed upon a *judicious* and *Scriptural* use of this weapon of the spiritual armoury:—if this be so, then I appeal to any unprejudiced mind in this Church, how can I—how dare I—be silent on such a subject, simply because some may abuse it? Am I not obliged in certain cases, to *permit* confession; nay, sometimes, to *move* my brother to unburden his soul?

He was bound, he said, in honour, not to *enforce* Confession, or to speak as if those who do not use it were of necessity in a lower spiritual state, or less sure of forgiveness, than those who do. He did not consider himself obliged to receive to a formal Confession everyone who came for that purpose; he was bound not merely to weigh carefully the family rights of husbands, parents, &c., but to see that it was not the effect of false teaching or of morbid feeling. He considered himself instructed by his Church to offer this means of grace as an *exceptional* help, and not as part of the ordinary life of the Christian soul. As a wise physician, it was his duty to consider the circumstances of those who came to him for advice; to teach God's truth as simply as possible; to help a man to help himself; to leave Nature, as it were, to herself for a time.

Then—and only then—when, after watching the case, and praying for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I see that this special remedy is needed, I am bound, like the bodily physician, to prescribe that remedy; to repeat it, if necessary, again and again; but—mark the end of my sentence—only to continue its use till the health of the patient is re-established.

The sermon ended, in the preacher's most characteristic manner, with an appeal for real repentance.

Put aside, if you will, all thought of private Confession. Maintain your freedom. Support the rights of the individual conscience. Condemn, if you will, every word that has been said. But, by the love of Christ, I appeal to any of you who have never felt the burden of your sins to be *intolerable*. Take heed, my brother, lest your heart is being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. This is a matter not of controversy, but of life and death. Before you sleep to-night, take your Bible, and say on your knees : ' O God, have I repented ? Create in me a clean heart, O God ! '

The sermon on Absolution began with recalling the Lord's words after the Resurrection, and the use made of them in the Prayer Book, and asked what they meant.

I know full well, the preacher said, how easily, by one unguarded phrase, I may put a stumbling-block in the way of those whom God has entrusted to my care. But I feel that in this crisis of the Church's history anything is better than a timid reserve.

He said that he was only concerned with the doctrine of the Church of England, not with that of others ; that the Church of England nowhere speaks of ministerial absolution as necessary to salvation ; that it never claims for its clergy the power to absolve irrespective of the conditions laid down in Holy Scripture ; that there is no opposition in this matter between clergy and laity—the clergy are not indeed the mere officers of a civil society, still less the delegates of their congregations ; they are called by God and ordained according to Apostolic order ; but they are only the organs of the body, which consists of all the baptized ;—that God has always worked upon men through men. He then turned to speak of the unimagined dreadfulness of sin, and how Christ brought down the power of absolution to meet and heal it. He told the story of a slave who had been set free, but did not know it till one came who could tell her.

Anything is better than that one human being for whom Christ died should be left for years without the peace of God

resting on his heart. Anything is better than that the Devil should tyrannize over that child of God—should keep him a cowardly, half-hearted Christian, should persuade him that the past is *not* absolved, that his evil habits are invincible; that the power of the Omnipotent God is not able to strengthen his weakness, and to set free his fettered spirit. Anything is better than that one man or woman should go on believing that the Devil is king, and that Christ is *not* the Emancipator of Humanity.

So to return to my illustration. If Satan's captive has read in the Journal of the Heavenly Kingdom the charter of his freedom, written in the Blood of Calvary's Cross; if, that is, he has studied his Bible, and yet is not at peace; if he has gone up into the market-place, and heard the proclamation of the general amnesty; if, that is, he has knelt in the great congregation and listened to the public Absolution, and yet finds that the snare is *not* broken, that he is not delivered; if he has become perplexed; if friends are whispering to him, 'You have no right to the liberty of the true Christian,' or 'The Peace of God is a mere dream of fanatics'; and if Satan, that hard slave-owner, holds over him the lash, and shouts in his ear, 'You are *not* free, go back to your bondage; you are mine, I have bound you for years; you fell again yesterday!'—what is to be done? . . .

Precisely what was done by that poor slave. Let him go to some Minister of God's Word, and open his grief.

He then pointed out that the minister recommended by the Church was some 'discreet and learned minister,' and that the minister, if he is in any sense to judge, must know the facts.

But when—so far as fallible man can be—I *am* satisfied that the man is sincere, and repents, and believes in Jesus, then I am told to stand up, without the shadow of a misgiving, in the name of my Church, in the name of the invisible Head of the Church, and to say in the strongest possible words, 'Thy sins are forgiven. . . . I absolve thee from all thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' Then I kneel down after the model of the prayer in the Visitation Service, and I pray God to ratify the word spoken in His Name, for Jesus' sake.

To the penitent and believing soul the word of Absolution is indeed applied by God the Holy Ghost. I speak that which

I know ; I thank God that I have been allowed to see the blessed power both of public and private Absolution. . . . The man goes on his way with a happy, trusting heart, saying, 'Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.'

One word in conclusion.

I sympathise with your difficulties in this matter. I go with you heart and soul, in trying to guard the doctrine of Absolution from all abuses. But may I speak a word in all tenderness ?

If you cannot understand what is meant by the 'burden' of sin, and the hard battle with evil ; if you know nothing of the happiness of realising that your sins are forgiven, you have yet to learn the very alphabet of Christianity ! Even one little sin would be to an angel an intolerable burden.

Condemn my teaching if you will, toss aside the human words, but go home, I beseech you, and kneel down before God, and say, 'O, God I do not see things as the Bible sees them, and as Christians in every age have seen them. Be merciful to me, a sinner. Create in me a clean heart, that I may learn what is really meant by that intolerable burden of which the Prayer Book speaks ; that I may know what is meant by those words, *Thy sins are forgiven ; go in peace.*'

Perhaps not every member of the congregation was led to adopt the views set forth in these sermons, but there was no further opposition, nor the fear of it. The entire rectitude of the vicar's action, and the reasonableness of his teaching, were transparent to all. His influence in the parish became greater than ever.

In reference to these sermons the Very Rev. Dr. Macleod writes :

The friendship begun in Rome was maintained when we both returned, each to his special work in the one Church of Christ. I remember several delightful visits paid by him to me in my Scottish manse. More than once he was accompanied by Prebendary Stooks, and I visited him when he was in Bishop Auckland, when he took me to Durham to show me his old home, and also to Seaham Harbour. Later on I was never in London without seeing him. On one of those occasions he was conducting a Mission at St. Peter's, Eaton Square, to which I went.

There were a few people scattered in the silent Church, most of them engaged in prayer. There was a hushed awe over the place which was most impressive. I gave my card to the verger and after a little the vestry door opened, and Wilkinson, with a grave smile, beckoned me to enter. Almost his first words were: 'My dear Donald, how is it that when I am getting narrow you are sure to turn up?' I think it was at that time he was in some trouble because of a sermon he had preached on Confession, and when we met in the Rectory he read the sermon he had prepared for publication, and in which he quoted a number of instances from the Old Testament illustrating the benefit and duty of Confession, in regard to which I took the liberty of pointing out that in every case he cited it was not the priest but the prophet, the man of spiritual insight to whom confession had been made, and the harmony of this with the direction in the Prayer Book as to selecting some wise and godly minister—not a mere official, but a man of prophetic insight.

It should be remembered, in appraising the courage displayed in these sermons, that the time when they were delivered was not long before the agitation which arose over a book called 'The Priest in Absolution.' That book, which was the subject of debates in Parliament, drew forth a violent outbreak of hostility to everything connected with Confession. It was therefore doubly chivalrous in Wilkinson to come forward in defence of the suspected practice at a moment when the air was, as he knew, so charged with opposition.

CHAPTER VII

THE LEEDS MISSION.

JUST at the end of the Mission, and when the trouble about Confession was thickening round him, Wilkinson went to breakfast with Sir Thomas Beauchamp—it was Thursday, February 19, 1874—to meet a remarkable American, Mr. R. Pearsall Smith, who was then sojourning in England. He notes the day in his diary—'A day to be remembered—P. Smith told me of Peace and Rest in Christ.' They met several times after that.

In August of that year a Convention, or devotional assembly, was gathered to meet Mr. and Mrs. Pearsall Smith at Broadlands, the house of Mr. Cowper-Temple, near Romsey. Mr. Cowper-Temple (afterwards Lord Mount Temple) threw open his beautiful house and park, which had been Lord Palmerston's, with the most unbounded hospitality, and great numbers who could not be taken into the house were accommodated with rooms in the quaint town close at hand. It was perfect summer weather, and many of the meetings were held out of doors, under a clump of spreading beech trees, where the cooing of the wood-pigeons was joined with the voices of the people, as they sat and sang Sankey's hymns. The object of the Convention was to deepen the work of sanctification. Mr. and Mrs. Wilkinson were among those who attended it—or rather a part of it. Wilkinson gave an address the first evening that he was there. He acknowledged that at first he felt out of sympathy with the heterogeneous gathering; but it grew upon him. 'Broadlands very blessed,' he wrote in his diary. 'It was a wonderful time,' he said to his daughter; 'every one in the house seemed to live in the same spiritual atmosphere. The servants spoke quite simply to us of the sermon the night before.' The life and heart of

the whole gathering was the American lady—a Quakeress to begin with—who had a charming way of disarming the prejudices of the 'dear theologians,' whom she was addressing. It was a true refreshment for mind and body to all who took part in the Convention.

Until the year 1875 Wilkinson had never in the strict sense conducted a Mission away from his own parishes. But in January of that year he conducted one of the most notable Missions ever held in England, the great Mission at the Parish Church of Leeds. Rarely, in our times at least, has any purely religious movement taken such hold upon the whole life of a great community. Dr. Gott, afterwards Bishop of Truro, was then Vicar of Leeds; and though Leeds ever since Dr. Hook's time had been broken up into many ecclesiastical parishes, and the independence of each was maintained, the Mission had been arranged in its broad outlines by a central committee, and that Central Committee was mainly guided by the Vicar of the Parish Church.

I remember, writes the Rev. J. H. Moore, my own impressions on arrival. Everywhere one saw some placard or notice indicating the thoroughness of the preparation and the interest taken. The whole town (not yet a city) seemed 'held up' by the Mission. The omnibus that took me to my host's house had its notice.

The Leeds Mission, says the 'Report' which was published after it, was not undertaken or commenced hastily, as will be seen from the fact that at a meeting of the Ruridecanal Chapter, held April 13, 1874, it was resolved that a Special Meeting of the Clergy should be held on April 17, to which the Rev. G. H. Wilkinson, Vicar of St. Peter's, Eaton Square, well known throughout the land as a Missioner whose labours were remarkably successful, should be invited. He attended, and gave counsel as to the best way of conducting a Mission. Many valuable suggestions, which proved most useful afterwards, were given respecting the various ways in which Church-workers could help forward a Mission, respecting the mode of conducting services, after-meetings, &c. Mr. Aitken addressed a similar meeting on April 18. It was then unanimously resolved to hold

a Mission. The note of preparation was thus struck nine or ten months before the event itself took place.

Saturday, January 23, 1875, was set apart for solemn preparation and united prayer on the part of the clergy and the missioners. At morning prayer in the Parish Church Mr. Wilkinson gave an address, setting forth the conditions of success in preaching the Gospel. In the afternoon he addressed the Church-workers of the Parish Church. That night he was taken ill. His place on the first Sunday afternoon, at a most important address to men, was obliged to be taken at short notice by the Rev. A. C. Thynne, Rector of Kilkhampton in Cornwall. No fewer than twenty-eight clergymen had been engaged to assist in the work in the parish. Wilkinson, though suffering, was able to preach on the Sunday night and following days. 'Leeds Parish Church,' Mr. Moore says, 'with its large congregation, was a sight worth seeing at this Mission.' On some of the week-day evenings many were unable to find room. The great majority stayed for the after-meetings.

The special services for men were largely attended, particularly on the second Sunday, when there must have been at least 2000 men present, who listened for nearly an hour and a half, with rapt attention, to the burning words spoken by the Chief Missioner. On the same Sunday evening nearly as many must have been sent away as those who were in the Church, which was more than crowded in every corner.

Leeds—said a local paper, representing generally a Dissenting interest—has been the scene of a very unusual excitement during the past week. In the middle of the day men of business have left their merchandise; during the hours of labour the steam engine has been checked; before the ordinary time for closing shopkeepers have put up their shutters; and, strange to say, these wonders have been accomplished neither by fast nor feast, neither by an extraordinary calamity nor by an ordinary occasion for rejoicing. Religion has done it all. In this great centre of industry religion has arrested business and manufacture, has succeeded in stirring society to its depths, and in showing herself in a new light to thousands. Men have been led to reflect that this is a subject of practical importance, for its reality

has been put to a rough test, and they have seen it stop a mill and lock an office door.

It is not to be supposed that this surprising effect was all to be traced to the preaching of Mr. Wilkinson. Probably the man who attracted more hearers than anyone during that Mission was the Rev. W. H. M. H. Aitken, now Canon of Norwich, whose power as a preacher was perhaps never more displayed than then. Much also was due to the good Bishop of Ripon, Robert Bickersteth, who was indefatigable in his preaching, especially out of doors and in workshops and railway yards. But there were innumerable souls who fell under the spell of Wilkinson's preaching, and perhaps even more of his prayers, at the Parish Church.

The Rev. Maurice Ponsonby, Vicar of Wantage, writes to the author of this Memoir :

Possibly some few incidents in connexion with the Mission may be useful to you. I was curate at the Parish Church. We were in great difficulties as to a Missioner. I offered to go up to London and try to persuade Wilkinson to come. I think the Octave was being held at St. Peter's ; anyhow, he was busy, and said he could only see me one night at ten o'clock. I went by appointment, and laid the matter before him. He took it all in his usual very serious way, with prayer, and some days afterwards he wrote to Dr. Gott to say that he would undertake the Mission.

I have always looked on this Mission as by far the most effectual I have known. Wilkinson was, I believe, somewhat concerned to find that the Vicar of Leeds had collected some twenty-five clergy of all sorts of views to work in the Mission at the Parish Church ; but he at once ' handled ' us, and told us exactly what he wished us to do. Dr. Gott was a great help to him. The congregations were enormous, partly, I think, because by Wilkinson's direction the parish had been carefully prepared, and there had been much intercession, and partly because people were attracted by his very plain, straight, sympathetic style of preaching.

I remember many incidents of the Mission. He gave an address to the clergy in which he told us that surely if ' two men from America,' Moody and Sankey, could produce such an effect, we should endeavour—and so on. He showed wonderful faith

thus. In the old style of Mission work, we clergy were told off to go round the church at the conclusion of his after-address, and talk to the people remaining on their knees, but we were never to go back on his teaching. That is, if he had preached on the Holy Spirit, we were to speak on that subject, though the person might not have been present at his sermon on conversion the night before. He said it would be doubting the guidance of God to do otherwise.

I was much struck by his respect for the office of a Bishop. The Bishop of the diocese commented on some point in his arrangement at the after-address. He at once altered his plan out of respect for the Bishop.

His love for souls was then, as always, very great. We had many instances of it. He was an anxious Missioner, for his health was then uncertain. Mrs. Wilkinson came with him to the services, and sat on the pulpit steps, and gave him soup in the vestry before the after-address. The clergy were asked to help him by a short intercession in a room close by the church before the service each night.

At the end of the Mission he called all the parochial clergy up and told them individually how to deal with separate cases. One I remember was a person tempted to drink in the morning. He said it showed a weakness of body, and that I was to tell the person to eat a sandwich.

At the end of the Mission numbers of people came to the altar rails and received the Memorial Card. I have mine, I find, with the date.

A clergyman wrote to him from Ireland a year after, and said :

God led me to Leeds in a remarkable manner. Your teaching met my needs in many ways. By the mercy of the guiding Spirit I was helped both in my own soul and in my ministry. Following your example, I held after-meetings in my church, both in Lent and Advent, and as not a few persons have spoken and written to me of the help they received, I think it only right that you should learn about this indirect fruit of the happy ten days at the dear old Parish Church at Leeds. I look upon that interval as the happiest of my life, and God has given me more encouragement in my ministry than in any previous year.

The following letters written at the time by the Rev. H. C. Sturges, then a curate at the Parish Church, to his father and mother, give an excellent idea of the impressions of the moment.

91 Gray's Terrace, Leeds: Wednesday night, 10 P.M., February [3], 1875.

DEAREST MOTHER,—The Mission has *just* come to an end. Since you left, the wonderful work has increased more and more, and the shepherding of those awakened has become an awful responsibility. On Monday night Wilkinson was quite overawed with the definite results—case after case, where *men* have come forward quite overcome with the intolerable burden of sin. Thynne was saying, I think, that on Monday night there was not a man in his block who had not some such burden on his conscience. One man who had robbed his master five years ago went and told him of it, and both master and servant—the latter I *know*—came to the Thanksgiving Service with unmistakable happiness. The enclosed paper was given to all on Monday night as they entered church; then Wilkinson announced from the pulpit, that all who had received a blessing in the Mission should come to a Thanksgiving Service, which was indeed a glorious one. About 1500 came, and the clergy, about seventeen in number, gathered round the altar, and sang the Te Deum. This service over, all who desired Memorial Cards of the Blessings received were desired to come to-night.

First the clergy knelt before Wilkinson, receiving the card and his blessing; then the people all came up to the altar rails, to receive the cards, and all their names were taken down in the ante-chapel—about 500, perhaps more, received them. Tears of gratitude and such hearty thanks..

——— came with her husband to-night, and desired me to write down, that she returned thanks to Almighty God for the Blessing she had received by means of Mr. Wilkinson, and she says you helped her very much.

Wilkinson must have been at church till twelve last night, and will remain till about one to-night, as the ante-chapel was nearly full of people wanting to see him.

His advice to us at the Conferences is quite *the* Mission to us. His experienced spirituality, *entire* dependence on God's Holy Spirit, and the implicit faith in the efficacy of prayer, are so invaluable. It seems hardly right to write about such things, but the results of those 12 o'clock Prayer Meetings have been

quite wonderful, cases prayed for have been brought in, and are now enjoying the blessing of the Mission.

It is the Vicar's great wish that all who have helped in any way should continue their intercession for us, that He who has begun a good work among us, may continue it, even unto the end.

The Prayer Meeting will go on every Friday till Easter. Let my Father see this, but do not let the girls pass it round for the usual criticisms—let them read it quietly. The saving of souls is the most awfully solemn of all work.

The lists of all the people will be made out to-morrow, and Wilkinson will advise how all shall be dealt with. He says there is enough work for the next six months for a staff double our number.

Yours ever,
H. C. STURGES.

Leeds: February 9, 1875.

DEAR FATHER,—Names here keep pouring in for classes, and it seems doubtful whether our staff can manage the extra work thrown upon it. Wood was saying that he had ten classes in the week. I saw the Vicar yesterday; he said, 'I have classes at 5, 7, and 8 to-day.' So that will give you an idea of what a movement has taken place in the Mission.

Wilkinson has divided all the people into two great classes: (1) Those who have found peace, and are resting simply on our Lord. These are to be built up by all the teaching and help possible. (2) Those who are still anxious about the salvation of their own souls. These are to be put into instruction classes to learn and study the very foundation of Christianity. So many of our regular communicants have been quite broken down by the Mission, living, as they have been, a religious life of self-examination, without active faith, or ever having really grasped the idea that the debt has been paid to God once and for all, that now they are reconciled and saved without doubt, if they believe and surrender their hearts to Him who is alive for evermore.

He combines the lowest and the highest Church teaching, in fact with him the expressions have no meaning. When the faithful have found pardon and peace, and are able to serve God with a *quiet* mind, then, and not till then, does he advocate all the means for help afforded by our Church.

He has been of immense use here, and at once put his finger on just the *need* of this place. His experience handed on in conference was quite delightful.

Yours ever,
H. C. STURGES.

Kirkgate, Ripon: February 19, 1875.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—The Bishop is very full of the Leeds Mission. Mrs. ——, who is an extremely nice person, tells me that she was a servant in the Wilkinson's family twenty years ago, when '*our* George' was in his teens. She says, he was never but once angry with them, and that was because they had not been to church some night in Holy Week. She tells me he had a *saintly* mother, who died when he was ten years old, a sort of Hannah, who dedicated George to the Lord. He was always a most diligent and devoted son with his mind set in one direction. Mrs. —— says they were a wonderfully good and affectionate family, and that the Father only changed, as she says, 'for glory.' How things come round, don't they?

As curates, we gave him (G. H. W.) a very nice book in grateful remembrance of his help.

I send you our Lent Services. Show them, please, to my Father. It contains very good courses for the building up of the awakened Christian, does it not?

The papers here are saturated with Justification by Faith. It comes in every possible form.

H. C. S.

The Leeds Mission had, of course, been for a long time the subject of fervent intercession at the Saturday Prayer Meetings in St. Peter's, and on his return from the Mission Wilkinson, as was his wont, gave an account of it at the Prayer Meeting on Saturday, February 13, 1875, that those who had prayed for the Mission might know how to frame their thanksgivings.

He said that it was one of the most remarkable Missions ever seen—such marvellous unity among the clergy. The mill-owners so anxious to close the mills, and give the men opportunities of joining in the Mission. The Bishop going about addressing the men, such an atmosphere of prayer; this affected the *men* so much—Mr. Aitken—such wonderful power given.

For Mr. Wilkinson's own part, he tried to look on it as the

work of God through His Church—the power of the Holy Spirit in answer to intercession; he thought of himself as merely a *voice*—the giver of a message. Never was such preparation. For months the clergy had met constantly for prayer, meditation, and raising their own spiritual life—such unity. In the Parish Church twenty clergy who were working there—including seven who belonged to the church—day by day met at 12.30 for conference. There was unbroken harmony, not one jar. Every evening after the last service these twenty clergy knelt together at the altar rails, committing the day's work to God.

The fine church held 4000 people. It was always full on Sunday nights: there was good music, &c.; so there was nothing remarkable in its being full at the Mission on Sundays—but it had been full on week-days, often in squally weather. At the men's service the last Sunday 3000 had been present.

As for the result, they did all they could to *sift*, tried to prevent any coming for memorial cards who had not received a definite blessing—put off giving them one night, for further sifting—made it a solemn thing—gave them kneeling at altar rail—500 people came. Many were brought clearly and distinctly out into peace. The workers were so helpful—some greatly blessed themselves. Classes were now formed, meetings held, &c. The seven clergy were following it up so well.

He said that he had begun with two or three strong sermons about *sin*. This brought on a darkened heavy time to every one. Then in different ways he brought out the Gospel Message, how the sin-offering had been accepted, the meaning of Christ's Passion. God seemed to give him such simplicity. Poor old people who could not read said 'it was all so plain.' One night he was rather vexed. There was a woman looking about, so careless, trying to attract attention, even there. He went and spoke to her, and asked her to pray. She said she was 'too bad for that.' He said 'Well, then, tell *that* to God, not to me.' By and by she sobbed, quite broken down. Before the end of the Mission she was so happy, and praying for others, going about trying to make up to those she had wronged, and so on. So many had been touched by hearing of the prayers going up from St. Peter's, and by his confidence in his own people. Now, people in Leeds are praying for *us*. The blessing will be given back to us. Cabmen in Leeds were melted by hearing that St. Peter's Cabmen's Class would be praying for them.

He spoke of God's goodness to himself. He felt so weak and helpless, yet was kept so happy. He had found abundance of strength for all he had to do. He was ill at first; he realised 'the sentence of death in himself,' that the 'power might be all of God.' He had been obliged to receive Holy Communion at home on the first Sunday morning.

One day he felt nearly overpowered. Nearly 1600 people stayed for the after-meeting. He did not know how to manage them. Next morning he went to the Bishop, who was staying in the same house with him, and told him about it. He asked his prayers and his blessing privately; he found him to be (as he had always found Bishops to be if approached rightly) his Father-in-God. He went out from the interview calm and strengthened. The people at Leeds would want prayer for the future. We were to remember them at least for a month.

Why is it, he asked, that the same word which helped them into the light has so often been spoken *here*, and with comparatively so little result?

There are good workers here, but people are still in darkness. The message is given, that the barrier is broken down, the sin offering accepted. The Holy Ghost is with us; answers to prayer are certain. I am full of thankfulness and trust; only you must keep praying that whatever the hindrance may be, whether in the clergy, or in yourselves, God will take it away in His own time and His own way.[1]

The Venerable Dr. G. R. Wynne, Archdeacon of Aghadoe, has favoured the writer with the following reminiscences of the Mission:

I can never be thankful enough for the invitation which I received to be one of a band of some twenty-eight clergymen who helped in the Leeds Mission of 1875. Not a few of these had conducted or helped in Missions before, but a new light on their Mission work and on the spiritual life in their own souls shone in the Leeds Mission. It was dark, cold, miserable January weather. I remember, on the Friday of the Mission week at the afternoon service about 3 o'clock, an extraordinary gloom settled down over the city, and there was a thrill in many hearts as Mr. Wilkinson, himself much impressed, spoke of the great darkness out of which came the cry, on which he had been

[1] Notes taken down at the time by Miss Hankey.

speaking at the time: 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?'

The method of the missioner at the Parish Church was, in a sense, simple. He had a 'message to Leeds.' He was 'sent.' That is the meaning of a Mission. On the first Sunday morning he preached on 'Behold, I send My messenger.' God has sent His messengers in every age. They have been misunderstood, opposed, ignored, persecuted, but their message has never been quite in vain. It shall not be in vain in Leeds. The message is threefold: to show men their sin; to show men their Saviour; to lead them to surrender themselves to Christ.

In these short sentences lay the main teaching of the whole Mission; and in all instructions, Mission sermons, and even occasional addresses, all was fitted into this framework. I speak of the 'teaching' of the Mission, for that which impressed me from the first was that here exhortation took altogether a place second to teaching. Every address left behind it not so much a recollection of feelings stirred as of spiritual knowledge gained, for conscience, faith, and will to assimilate. Not alone in the morning 'instructions' at 11.15, but in the great service attended by some 3500 souls, at eight in the evening, in the conferences with workers, in the special addresses to men only, those three foundations were built on, and no one paying reasonable attention could fail to take away with them the 'teaching of the Mission.' The topics were pressed home with sometimes awful force, sometimes with winning tenderness, and always with the magnetic power of a unique personality, the personality of a man who lived above the earth, and moved in a region of unworldly things.

The workers, clergy, and lay people were called together daily at one o'clock for a conference on the work which was to be done. And I recollect the care with which Mr. Wilkinson on the first occasion of these conferences sent a message by their friends present to any invalids in the parish who were unable to help as active workers. 'I rely much,' he said, 'on the help that invalids can give by their prayers.' In his addresses to the workers Mr. Wilkinson seemed to read the hearts of those present. I know one heart at least which he wonderfully read. He was not so much giving the helpers hints as to what he wished them to do, as rather preparing them spiritually and mentally for difficulties and problems which might confront them. For instance, he said, I think on two occasions, 'Prepare for the

opposition of Satan. His method in a mission, when God is about to use His servants, is in some subtle way to throw a cloud of darkness over their own faith, to try to lead them temporarily to despair of their own salvation or spiritual life, and so to cripple them for the time when they have important work to do for others, by causing them to be unhappy about themselves. In such a case you should turn on the tempter, as if you saw him beside you, and say, "Get thee behind me, Satan." The more you try to ruin my faith, the more you will throw me on my Saviour. I am indeed quite as bad as you say, but Christ has redeemed me, and I trust Him with all my heart.' Treat Satan as a real foe, always most busy where his kingdom is being most boldly assaulted. He is personal; and he is a coward before the Name of Jesus.

'You wish to know how you can help in the church after the Mission service? After the second address people will be asked to remain on their knees if they wish to stay. I shall tell them that someone will offer to pray with them, if they so desire. That will give you an opening. Go quietly, in the part of the church assigned to you personally, and if you see one kneeling, go beside him and ask whether he wishes prayer to be offered; if not, pass on; if he does, try in a few words to learn for what he wishes prayer to be made. What is in the mind? Some will speak of great sins. Some will be unhappy, hard, perplexed, anxious yet unwilling to be spoken with. Do not so much try to converse, as to find out what should be asked in prayer. Some will be quite unable to express themselves. These you might ask whether they understand the special teaching of the Mission. Keep to that if possible. Do they take in the threefold teaching? Is their difficulty about their sin? About their Saviour? About their own surrender to Christ? The place of most people who are anxious may thus be traced on the map of the mind by this guide. Try to keep the penitent from vague self-accusations. If he says he cannot *feel*, ask him if he *knows* that he has sinned. Get him if possible to open his lips and tell to God what he has done or been. Much is gained in this way. A great point is won when the penitent has uttered his mind to God. If he says, "I cannot feel that Christ has died for me," you can say "Then let us just tell God that. Say O, Lord, I cannot feel that I am a sinner; I cannot feel that Christ has died for me." There is a power in thus opening the lips and telling the state of things to our Saviour. Try and guard those

who seem to be morbid or sentimental from the habit of talking to themselves about themselves.'

The deep hush, faintly interrupted by whispered prayers and consultations in various parts of the great church, with its old, dark, polished seats, and towering carved pulpit was very solemn. One felt, night after night, that here serious business was being transacted which would affect eternity. And indeed none could doubt that the Mission was really under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, who was 'moving on the face of the waters.' The teaching on each day was the same at the morning instruction, and in the evening Mission service. The note-books of not a few attentive hearers were stocked with hints and thoughts which have doubtless proved invaluable helps to them in the years which came after. The evening sermon was the great event of the day. It was solemn in the extreme. The pale, anxious face of the missioner, rarely lit up by a smile, looked down on an immense congregation. The order of the addresses was as follows:

1. Sin.
2. The Discovery of Sin.
3. The Confession of Sin.
4. The Atonement, the Price Paid.
5. The Love of the Atonement.
6. Beholding the Lamb.
7. Self-surrender.
8. The Sacramental and Obedient Life.

Some of the texts, spoken as if the whole force of the Mission was placed on the texts, were most impressive. I specially recollect three: On 1, 'Be sure your sin will find you out.' On 5, 'He loved me, and gave Himself for me.' On 6, 'Stand still, and see the salvation of God.' The sermons were very freely illustrated, but not with analogies so much as with somewhat fully narrated stories, often out of the preacher's personal experience. These texts and these stories have remained with me as fresh in memory as when I first heard them thirty-three years ago.

It was the time of the first visit to Great Britain of the American evangelists, Messrs. Moody and Sankey. Mr. Wilkinson had sympathetic words to say of their work, which he said was in fact pressing the same truths which he placed before the people at Leeds.

There were in this impressive course suggestions on many points which may be gathered from the preacher's 'Lent Lec-

tures,' and 'Instructions in the way of Salvation,' and also from his tract, 'Be ye reconciled to God,' a tract which was distributed by the hundred at the time of the Mission, and which in fact contains the essence of the 'teaching.' He took great pains to connect his message with familiar words of our Church services; showing, for example, how closely all he taught followed the line of the Confession and Absolution in Matins and Evensong. Then came the teaching about Absolution, and the direct counsel to any who found their minds burdened, and could get no relief, to use as a most valuable means, in entering on the new life, the Church's medicine of Confession. He guarded his words by the counsels of the Prayer Book; and I know that he heard many confessions at that Mission. No help, he taught, was of more practical use in breaking with the old life of sin, than a general confession made out of a full heart.

The day's work, which must have been to the missioner exhausting, was concluded, sometimes at an advanced hour, by a silent ten minutes' kneeling at the altar rail of all the workers. I always noticed Mrs. Wilkinson there. It was the only occasion on which she appeared at the Mission, so far as I could notice, except when she was sometimes to be seen secretly conveying some little cup of soup or other nourishment to her husband between the principal sermon and the after-address in the evening.

Never did my heart—and I was but one of several who felt the same—go out in affection and reverence to any teacher as to George Howard Wilkinson at the Leeds Mission. I had heard him before in the London Mission, at Eaton Square; I had the joy of visiting him some years after at Lis Escop when Bishop of Truro, when once again the same magnetic personality deeply affected me with a sense that near him I was very near the spiritual world. I never parted with the memorial of the Mission, a simple *paper*—it was not a card—on which, below the text 'He was wounded for our transgressions . . .' he had written, not his name but that of each recipient; and when, some months after the Mission I wrote to express the help I had received, his reply was startling in its seriousness. 'Yes, if by God's help we remain faithful to the end, the days of that Mission will be our joy in eternity.'

It is hardly needful to say that during these years Wilkinson was in great request as a preacher and speaker at all kinds of

Church gatherings, and though it was necessary for him to husband his strength, he answered, when he could, to the appeals made to him. He spoke, as an invited speaker on spiritual subjects, at more than one Church Congress. His speech at the Nottingham Congress in 1871 made a great impression. It was on 'The Deepening of the Spiritual Life: its Hindrances and Helps among Clergy and People.'

Much, thank God, he said, which a few years ago had need to be written on this subject is now accepted by the common-sense of the English Church. Holy Communion is fast recovering its proper position. The Mission, the Retreat, classes of different kinds, guilds and associations—these and such like agencies are gradually winning their way amongst us. Yet in spite of all these multiplied means of grace, old principles still need to be reasserted; old obstacles still remain to hinder our onward progress. For the human heart is still unchanged. The old adversary has lost none of his ancient power—yea, rather has gained increasing subtlety and increasing courage by the experience which he has won, the souls which he has slain.

To begin with hindrances, I would note first the want of attention to trifles. . . . The second hindrance is the want of courage to use all the helps which God has placed within our reach. . . . The third hindrance is neglect of prayer. . . . The last hindrance to which I can refer is our own want of definiteness and consistency as ministers of God's Word.

If we lower the Bible ideal, and tacitly admit that it is impossible in the present age to develop the higher life of the early Christians—if, as years roll on, we see in our believers no fresh baptism of fire, no burning love for souls, no longing to speak for Christ, no new desires to sacrifice time and strength and money for the sake of Him by whose precious blood they have been redeemed—if we are surrounded by few instances of real heart-surrender—if we see men dying all around us for whose future we have at best a vague and uncertain hope—if, with our work thus barren of results, we never acknowledge to our people the miserable failure, but allow ourselves to talk in a half-complacent way about our beautiful service or our crowded church, the number of our lay helpers, or the prosperity of our clothing clubs, what can be the effect upon our

communicants of this want of distinctness in our teaching? What else but to rock them into

> that torpor deep
> Wherein we lie asleep,
> Heavy as death, cold as the grave?

Still worse is the effect of our inconsistent lives. I speak not now of those whose highest ambition is to be accounted good riders, successful gardeners, victorious croquet players; I speak not of those who can postpone God's work rather than disappoint a patron, or be deprived of some pleasant dinner. The world itself is learning now to tread under foot the salt that has lost its savour. I speak not of such as these. Their number is fast decreasing. Yet which of us is altogether clear in this matter? How many a layman is thrown back in his religious life by the careless talk, the irreverent use of God's words, the bitter party feeling of his spiritual pastor! . . . May I go further? For when we meet as brethren, surely we may speak to each other in all frankness. 'Can the blind lead the blind?' If life is to be deepened it must first have been quickened into being. Are all of us alive to God through Jesus Christ? Have we all yielded our hearts to Him—found for ourselves that peace which passeth understanding?

A letter was once written to an old clergyman whose ministry had been greatly blessed. 'My people,' said the writer, 'are cold and heartless. Tell me how I can effect a revival of religion in my parish.' The answer was very brief. May God the Holy Ghost write it on our hearts. 'My brother,' he said, 'revive thyself.'

His description of the helps to be used was no less characteristic of the speaker and his methods.

The kingdom of heaven is like leaven. The clergy discharge for the most part the duties of English citizens and ministers of God. In both characters, if they would deepen the life of their people, they must work from the centre to the circumference. As citizens they will begin with the parsonage. The influence of the parsonage is readily acknowledged; yet how often are we tempted to act the part of the 'infidel' and fail to provide for the spiritual needs of our own households! The servants who see us in all our varying moods—the children from whose hearts

the sting of an awakening sermon is so often extracted by the after talk of the earnest, Christ-loving preacher, who, tired with the long day's work, has cast aside his armour, in the quiet evening hour. The wife above all—how little help does she receive! Even in the holiest season—the management of her household, the provision for receiving the Mission preachers, the manifold secular cares—how little leisure is left from all this serving of tables to sit like Mary at the Redeemer's feet; yet how much is expected from her! I hope the time is not far distant when an annual retreat will be arranged for the wives of the clergy—a retreat so ordered as neither to overtax the physical strength of the feeble, nor demand at first too high a standard of the spiritual attainments—a holy season from which each one shall return strengthened by the Holy Ghost, to become, unconsciously it may be, but not less truly, a mighty power for God with all amongst whom her lot is cast. The same principle of working from the centre to the circumference applies also to the clergyman, as pastor of his people. If I were asked how to begin work in a new parish, without, of course, ignoring more obvious agencies, I should answer as follows: Urge your people in well nigh every sermon to treat you as a friend, and speak freely to you of their spiritual needs. When one man has come, teach him, help him, pray with him, till, so far as you can judge, he has really repented and believed. Then send him out in the freshness of that new found peace to tell to some friend what the Lord has done for his own soul. Then let the two friends pray together till a third is added to the list. When Sunday School teachers and Visitors are given you, pray with them. Teach them all that they are able to receive. . . . Let the Church workers and praying people be used as instruments by which the neighbourhood may be leavened till, 'like circles widening round upon some clear blue river, orb after orb, the wondrous sound is echoed on,' and the parish is filled with the knowledge of the Lord.

These thoughts lead naturally to another principle of still more vital importance. Alike in the perfecting of His saints and in the saving of sinners our blessed Lord had a separate individual care for each individual soul. . . . His disciples came to Him privately. . . . How this individual dealing can best be accomplished is one of the problems which the Church is now called to solve. I am not here to ignore its difficulties, still less to unfurl a battle flag by dogmatising on the subject of Con-

fession. So far as I can understand it, it seems that to enforce it—to enforce it directly or indirectly—is alien to the mind of the English Church. To refuse it, or by silence to ignore its existence, is to rob our people of a part of their Christian heritage. Be this as it may, on two points I am thoroughly convinced. First, that unless pastor and people are brought into individual personal contact with each other, the spiritual life of a parish will not as a general rule be deepened. Secondly, if we wish to win the confidence of our congregations we must invite them again and again and so invite them that our meaning shall not be misunderstood. If we intend to enforce Confession, let us say so, and some will answer to our summons. If we are ready to help our people in a more informal manner, let this also be clearly explained. Let us speak out what we mean in an honest, straightforward, English spirit, and let us pray God that men as well as women may be brought in answer to our prayers.

He spoke with great fervour for what was then called the Additional Curates Society. At one such meeting, after dwelling upon the end and aim of the Church's mission—not only to bring individuals to the knowledge of God, but to join them in one Divine Society—he went on to say :

Just in proportion as the Church develops her corporate action, just as she realises that she is not merely a mass of separate disjointed atoms, but a living organization, with a vital self-propagating power, just in that proportion will she be able to extend herself to the uttermost corners of the earth. In like manner, just as the Church of England realises her powers of corporate action will she successfully perform the work which God has given her to do. But in these days of transition, when these ideas have not taken their proper place in men's thoughts, nothing is left us but to work by means of societies. And so most humbly and yet most confidently this association comes forward and offers her services. I speak as one that has received assistance from the Society, and I say that but for it many a clergyman would sink down exhausted under the burden of his work. . . .

In every part of England the Church is developing her strength ; but the population is everywhere increasing, and I heartily endorse the sentiment expressed in the Report, that it is only by keeping the centre warm and by keeping the curate

attached to the praying and working people of the parish, till he has gathered around him the nucleus of a new congregation, that we can hope to see the work prosper, or prevent the Church from being broken up into a mass of little pauper parishes. . . .

I cannot myself imagine what account will be given, when they stand before the Judgment Seat, by those who have never inquired what was needed in London, and who have allowed their own ministers to toil on with enfeebled frames, exhausted minds, and depressed spirits, without attempting to lighten their burden. Will they say 'I was so busy dancing, so busy making money, so devoted to my art, that I never inquired into the matter; I never even read the Report of this Society; I had no time to think of dying clergymen or starving parishioners?' . . .

Never was there an age in which it was more important that the clergy should be large-hearted and large-minded men; but I maintain that narrowness of view, and a feverish, excitable, morbid tendency to exaggeration are often the natural outgrowth of overstrained and overwrought brains, and consequently of depressed spirits. It is very easy for the Press to attack the clergy for not catching the spirit of the age. The words fall glibly from the pen, but I know myself what it is to be overdone. By the blessing of God, it is my privilege to have a large staff of clergy; but there are days when I find it an absolute necessity to be quiet, lest one should give vent to exaggerated sentiments. Consider, then, what must be the position of clergymen who have no time to be quiet. If you give to one man the work of ten, you have only yourselves to thank if exaggerated and foolish steps, as you may consider them, are sometimes taken by my brethren. There are men whom I knew at Oxford as distinguished for ability and breadth of view, but I have seen all the life, physically, intellectually, and even, I fear, spiritually, taken out of them simply by the press of work which a cruel and selfish country forced upon them.

At the thirty-fifth annual meeting of this Society, May 7, 1873, Wilkinson gave instances of conversion of which he had been witness in Missions:

I have myself sat in my seat in church and watched a person come into the church, giddy, frivolous, the very dress and demeanour marking her out as one whose heart had never been

yielded to Christ; and I have watched the effect, not of the words of the minister, but of the power of God sent down into our midst in answer to weeks of intercession. I have watched the colour pass from that face and the head droop, and I have followed that soul through the after-meetings and services of the Mission, and I have seen that soul wrestle with God for mercy, and watched it pass out into the freedom, not merely of God's reconciled children, but of those who are conscious that they are reconciled. I have watched that soul through a long life—for ten years—and seen it pass into a kingdom of glory, proved and tested by the manifold discipline of trial and adversity.

Again I have seen a poor drunken creature, whose name is a by-word in the streets of London, stray into the church at one of these Mission services. I have watched that soul, and traced its history through the Mission. I have seen the heart broken. I have seen the honest confession of sin to Almighty God. I have watched the personal dealing of God's ambassador with that individual soul. I have seen the bright face take the place of the sullen countenance that seemed at war with God and man. I have been allowed now for some three or four years to watch the progress of that soul amid many falls and relapses in the Church's road to sanctification, fed by the body and blood of Christ, growing in grace and in the knowledge and love of Christ.

And (greatest miracle of all) in answer to such a period of intercession I have seen your honest churchgoer, the man who was perfectly satisfied with himself, the man who was regularly perhaps at weekly Communion, the man who was ever ready to support his clergyman in every good work, the man who was foremost to speak for God at every public meeting—I have seen that man broken down by the Holy Ghost. I have seen his eyes opened till he was thankful to kneel with the Publican at the very entrance gate of the church, crying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner.' I have seen men of that description content to humble themselves before their fellow-men, and to tell everybody outside how superficial, how utterly unreal, how half-hearted had been all the devotion of their life, as the world considered it, to the Lord God Almighty.

In answer to a friend who asked him in 1877 to allow these words to be printed, for the encouragement of men conducting

Missions, he replied that, though he felt them as much as when he spoke them, Missions were being held in so many places wholly unprepared for them, that he thought the Church required rather to be guarded against unwise efforts than to have Missions urged upon it. Indeed, he had said as much at that very meeting. Although the resolution which he proposed was 'That it is desirable, not less for the interests of the Society itself than for the Church at large, that the Society should be willing to undertake some trouble and responsibility in assisting to make arrangements for the holding of special Mission services throughout the country,' he had insisted that the Society should discourage Missions where the place was not ripe for them. There was a time, he said, when these Missions were regarded with suspicion. Then no man had a Mission in his parish unless he felt that God had laid the burden on him. But now these Missions were fashionable, and there was great danger lest they should be held in parishes where the ground was not prepared. Hence the great value of a society such as this, to which an incumbent could apply not merely for the names of clergy who would act as missioners, but for general advice as to the necessary preparation for a Mission. It was well to have a society which would say to a man, 'Do not have your Mission next month, but wait a little while—even for a year, perhaps—until you have prepared your people for the battle'—for a battle it must and would be, if the Mission were a real work. It was an assault on the powers of darkness, and the struggle was always a terrible one.

A few extracts from his diary during the first half of his time at St. Peter's, Eaton Square, may be given here. They will show something of his severity with himself.

July 4, 1874.—A week without entries—partly overdriven, partly careless. . . . Schools not visited. Yet much helped to be calm and gentle (more at least than usual). Very tired and done, and then rest on Thursday given so lovingly. 'Resting under shadow' of His Presence 'with great delight.'

Sept. 14, 1874.—He taught me to separate temptation . . . from the sin; and even when I have sinned, a day of

temptation may be a penance, but is to be met with a shout of victory.

March 20, 1875.—Taught by weakness in eyes to be thankful for eyesight. Taught also by a wonderful incoming of spiritual blessing to thank God for my people, my parish, this Saturday night after Prayer Meeting.

May 8, 1875.—Thursday I yielded to Him, and Friday came —ill, and unable to help E. in Confession ; no ride ; the fasting a great trial ; but He led me like Elijah, and showed me the wild flowers which I gathered ; and then C. C. W. told me of D. and her surrender and my little note which helped her to give up all for God, and this note was given me, and I had been used by God. Satan tempted me in this week, by body weak, throat bad, eyes suffering, X. making me impatient, unbelief as to God's grace flowing through me—self-will, rebellion, murmuring ; but He helped me to know that this was the corpse of the old man, and to look at it from above.

August 1876.—Pontresina. Here I was taught to stand as a mountain, light or mist around, it matters not—to look calmly at dark and light clouds. Spirits of evil—angels of blessing—let them come and go, as He sees good—only stand fast in the Lord.

March 10, 1877.—A week of trial. No horse ; bad nights ; ill and worn. When I am weak, then am I strong. Mercies—long list ; especially address to District Visitors found so helpful, when I was utterly miserable, and could only cast it on God, saying, ' Oh, God, let my misery bring blessing to them.'

CHAPTER VIII

BEREAVEMENT

THERE was little that could be called home life for Wilkinson in those busy days ; but what there was of it had an extraordinary beauty and sweetness.

At St. Peter's, says one who was an inmate of the house, the Vicar had seldom time for quiet evenings, or to snatch an hour for reading poetry aloud, &c. But sometimes, when the day's work was over, he would rest awhile in his armchair in the library, Mrs. Wilkinson sitting beside him, and I was often on the floor or a stool at her feet. Then we would talk about the dear old Auckland parish and people, the day's doings, the children, or parochial matters, Sunday Classes, Sermons, &c.

Sometimes I would express rather strong opinions, or advocate various things ; then he would say (with an indulgent smile) to his wife, ' Carrie is *on* to-night ; let it all come out.'

The Vicar was always so engrossed with work that even his wife could often not secure an opportunity to consult him on important family or domestic arrangements. She always saved him trouble in every possible way, but I remember once, when some matter was very pressing, she at last sent word to the vestry that someone would be most grateful for a few minutes' interview, and, when a time was named, appeared herself at the door, and begged for a hearing, as she really wouldn't detain him long !

The health of Mrs. Wilkinson had never been robust. With all her high spirit and abounding energy, she had been liable to alarming collapses. Before the birth of her daughter Mary in 1868 she was so convinced that she would never come through it alive that she took farewell of her husband before putting herself into the hands of the medical attendants. The year 1877 was one of continual anxiety. It began with a period

of great misery for her—'a time of great trial,' he notes in his diary on the feast of the Epiphany; 'it is a narrow place and a heavy cross. To-day I arise and lay it at His feet. I feel there is mercy behind. We have deserved all; yet I will trust Him. Behind cloud, light. "My thoughts not your thoughts"; "thoughts of peace, and not of evil."' The pain and distress was at times so acute that he actually feared for her reason.

He preached before the University of Cambridge on Quinquagesima Sunday, and she was able to accompany him. By some unaccountable accident they had not been invited to stay with anyone, but he notes with thankfulness, as one of the bright spots in those sad months, his quiet time with her at the Bull Hotel. Two young Fellows of Trinity found out the state of the case, and went in the morning to offer him hospitality; they were amused at the way in which Mrs. Wilkinson flew out to protect him from interruption.

The work went on incessantly at even more than the ordinary pressure. All thoughts of the usual summer holiday in Switzerland were of necessity abandoned. At the end of the London season, on Sunday, July 29, Wilkinson preached a sermon in which he gathered up the lessons of the sermons delivered since Easter. The last part of it was as follows:

What a meaning, then, finally, is there in one more text: 'Thou shalt die'! My brethren, God has driven this text home into our hearts during the last season. Almost every week someone whom we knew well, someone whom we used to meet in society, someone, perhaps, who sat by our side at dinner a few days before, passed away. He is dead! Gone! Gone out silently, to meet his God! One by one—count them. How many there are! Even since last Easter, think how many men who were well known, whose faces were as familiar in society as any face in this congregation, have gone. And thou, too, dear brother or sister in Christ, 'thou shalt die.' Thou who art giving the message of thy Lord, thou too shalt die. Before another season, long months before another season, your body may be lying in its quiet resting place, 'dust to dust, ashes to ashes.' It may be in some foreign land, sheltered beneath the shadow of those great mountains; it may be by the shore of some

silent sea, whose waters will be breaking with their deep solemn murmur; or it may be in that quiet churchyard, where the bodies of your forefathers have been laid already.

My brethren, while I thank you for all you have been to your clergyman, I beseech you not to be misled by anything that is merely of the earth, earthy. However amiable you may be in society, however ready you may be to help on God's work in your parish, however perfect you may be so far as this life is concerned—I pray you, look this word in the face, 'Thou shalt die.' When your body lies there, dead, how will it be with your soul? Shall we be able to think of it with the blessed ones in Paradise? Or will it be surrounded by the lost spirits, waiting for the last dread Judgment, looking back on the world, and obliged to face lost opportunities, neglected Communions, godless words, money wasted or hoarded for self? Shall we have to think of that soul for which Christ died, alone, in all its awful individuality, in the land of darkness, thirsting with the unutterable thirst of a being created for God, but lost, because it refused to respond to the love of the Incarnate, the Crucified, the Ascended Lord?

It was the last sermon of his that his wife heard. On August 27 their youngest child, Margaret Cara, was born. On September 6 the mother died. His private diary for the latter day contains the entry: 'Holy Communion. Walk. Everybody "in the Spirit," "abounding in hope." Then I was going out. I did not. Upstairs. Strong faith.' Then follows an erasure, then—'Praise and Thanksgiving. We praise Thee. Glory be to God.'

The first lesson for that morning was the chapter of Ezekiel, 'Son of man, behold I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke; yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep.' The second was the great lesson of St. Paul, 'Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.'

Which of our readers, says a notice in the Magazine for the following month, who heard the sermon that was printed in the September Magazine could fail to mark the stillness amid which those words penetrated to every corner of St. Peter's: 'Thou shalt die'? Almost of necessity rose the answer in each breast,

' Who shall be the next ? Lord, is it I ' ? In how many hearts have the words continued to ring ?

To one, at least, the force with which they came was not new. She had faced it all before. So when serious illness came, and the more alarming symptoms arose, she was neither surprised nor affrighted.

On Saturday, September 1, after having gone on fairly well since her illness began on Sunday, August 26, Mrs. Wilkinson became decidedly worse. At the prayer meeting at 6 o'clock on that day earnest prayer was offered that, if it might be, the course of the malady might be stayed ; and up to the moment of her death a great stream of intercession was going up to God for the sparing of her life, unless His glory and her good required it to be otherwise. There was much alternation of hope and fear. Many times it seemed as though the answer was coming as all desired ; and even after the end had seemed very near on the Tuesday morning—so near that she had said farewell to her children—a turn was taken which allowed those around her to believe that she was on the road to recovery.

But it was not to be. At four o'clock on Thursday afternoon, September 6, her spirit passed quietly away.

So, in the wife of the preacher, have those last words of his sermon found their fulfilment : ' Her body is lying in its last resting place . . . in the quiet churchyard at home.'

It was first carried to St. Peter's, which was filled with her friends ; then laid in a peaceful corner of a neighbouring cemetery, there to await the great Resurrection Morning. In the beautiful flowers with which the coffin was covered, in the fresh ferns with which the grave was lined—everywhere the tokens of the tender thoughtfulness of those who loved and mourned her loss were manifest. . . .

Those who knew her best, and loved her most truly, shrink from using over her grave mere commonplace words. What she was to her children—the brightness which she shed over their life—the strength and the joy which she added to her husband's work—the difficulties which she lightened for him by her love and her prayers—the little acts of kindness which, unknown to all, save God and her husband, were prompted by her thoughtful care—the souls which she has won for her Lord, now mourning her loss or gone before her into Paradise—the influence which she exercised on so many by that pure, unselfish life, these are things on which we must forbear to speak ; and still less is this

the place to dwell on the details of that last week. It would, however, be ungrateful not to say that the Church's prayers were abundantly answered, though in the answer we have been taught afresh the oft-repeated lesson, 'My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord.'

To Mrs. Wilkinson was given the peace of a mind stayed on God; patience under great suffering; trust for those whom she felt sure that she was about to leave; and (rare gift of a Father to His most loving children) a visible foretaste of the bright rest into which she was entering; so that, dearly though she loved those from whom she was being separated, her last struggle was not for willingness to die, but for strength (if God so willed) to return to the earth from which in spirit she had departed.

For the Vicar and his children, the prayers of his people have been answered, in the bodily strength which enabled him to be almost entirely with her during days and nights of suffering, which, at times, was agony—in the power which they have all received not to murmur, but to acknowledge with thankfulness the mercy which has been mingled with their cup of bitter sorrow.

The funeral was on Thursday, the 13th. It was her wish to be carried to the grave by the much-loved cabmen in her class. On the 14th little Margaret was baptized. For one night—on the 14th—Wilkinson went down to Brighton with his eldest son and daughter—that daughter who at the age of less than eighteen was calmly to take her place as a mother to her younger brothers and sisters, and to give herself, with insight and devotion wholly extraordinary, to be a helpmeet to her father. He wrote in his diary:

Oh God, is it true? I think it is. I think—yes, I am sure to-day—I love Thee, O Father, O Holy Ghost, O Saviour, I do, and by Thy help I will love Thee more and more.

Gradually—he wrote a little later—we rose to the faith in the fact of a *living* Mother, seeing as with a vision supernaturally quickened, joying to behold our order, marking in each detail of our life the fruit of her own toil for us. We began to do greater things for our Lord and to put Him first, but the lesser things, the ordinary duties, of punctuality, &c., &c., were done to please her. We cared for the dear little body in which she dwelt, and

in which the Holy Ghost dwelt and spoke to her, but we knew that she was with us, observing all our loving care for it and loving us for our love. We believed that she *in* Christ (not merely with Christ, but *in* Christ) and we also in Christ could never be parted—that just as on earth in the latter days of her life I kept from her the knowledge of anything which would disturb, so He, to whom we had entrusted her unto that day, could by His holy angels either preserve her from the knowledge of that which was painful or strengthen her to rise above it, or, if her heart was grieved, could wipe away in a moment her every tear. To each of us came seasons when God allowed us to taste the cup, hours or moments of utter wretchedness: e.g. when I saw 'C. C. W.' on the cross at Brompton—times when I sobbed alone in her room—my library—at Chagford. But these were rare. Joy in her presence—almost able to hear her smiling. As a general rule we were kept by the power of God through faith. . . . We knew that she departed to be with Christ—*in* Christ—living to Christ—in that quiet Home where no wind nor storm could ever disturb or depress, where the thunder's roar and the lightning's flash would no more make her nervous—gone before to wait till each of her sons and her daughters, and he by whom these words are written, shall have finished their work on earth, and, washed from their sins in His Blood and renewed by His Spirit, shall be for ever reunited with her.

The Saturday after her death, September 8, he sent over to the prayer meeting the following Thanksgivings :

For the blessing to her and me of many Holy Communions.

For the long preparation of many months, in which she was taught to look forward for what was possibly coming.

For allowing us one day together on which solemnly to face death (before the illness began), to repent and believe afresh in our Lord.

For special help of the Holy Ghost, almost hour by hour vouchsafed—strength given me to be with her—texts sent to support me—a bright and happy confidence in her recovery.

That we were all able to have Holy Communion together—that God in His love allowed her for a while to look through the opened door and see some of the glory which shall be revealed—for letting her sons see her for the last time while the reflection of that glory was resting on her face.

For allowing her husband and her daughter to be quietly alone with her at the end.

For sparing her any pain at the end in answer to her prayer (for she dreaded the physical act of dying).

For words of trust and hope and submission spoken, to be remembered by those who remain.

For strong help given since.

He asked at the same time the prayers of the faithful :

For the Church—that prayers offered in hours of suffering may be answered in God's time and God's way.

For the Parish—that all according to their need may receive from God their own blessing in return for their tender sympathy for their Pastor.

For myself and my children—increase of Faith and Hope and Love, that God may reveal to us as we are able to receive it in what way we can severally glorify His Holy Name—in the Church—in our home—in our own lives,—' that we may perceive and know what things we ought to do, and also have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same.'

That the little child may live to be baptized.

True to her principle of putting God's work before anything else, Mrs. Wilkinson had always said that she hoped her husband would preach as usual after she died. He was spared the trial of doing this the first Sunday, as all had been arranged otherwise beforehand ; but on the Sunday after, he preached the second part of a sermon which he had begun a fortnight before, on Humility. On the 27th he went down into Devonshire for three weeks' holiday with his children, and then returned to take up everything again.

Letters of condolence rained in upon him from every side,—some of the most precious and consoling from Bishop Auckland, and from poor people connected with Windmill Street. Liddon wrote :

You know better far than most of us what such trouble means and how to use it, and I shall confidently expect that, through our Lord's grace and mercy, it will bless you, and through you the many souls who already owe you so much.

Archbishop Tait, soon to have a similar sorrow added to all else that he had borne, wrote from Dublin :

I know not what such a loss is, but I do know what it is to feel the brightness of home all obscured by a sudden calamity, and I know what is the difficulty of seeing the bright light shining through the dark clouds. . . . The work you have to do for our gracious Lord will be undertaken in even a deeper feeling of the realities of the world unseen. . . . But I must not run on—you know all I could say. I only wish that you should be assured of Mrs. Tait's and my own sympathy, as of that of a thousand others, who feel as if this blow to you was a family affliction of their own.

His own Bishop, already widowed, said :

I know too well what the sorrow is to attempt to comfort you ; but I know too that He who in love sent the blow, will be very near you with His felt presence,—nearer, probably, than you ever felt Him before. . . . May God comfort you with His true comfort, and may He enable you to keep clear and undimmed by the recurring duties and cares and anxieties of life, the vision of the realities of death and the world beyond, which He vouchsafes to us as a cordial in the first sad days of bereavement.

He wrote to the Rev. T. Myers, who had been present at the funeral :

2 Grosvenor Gardens, S.W. : Sept. 19, 1877.

My dear old Friend,—I want to tell you how touched we have all been by your coming up on Thursday. You have no idea how grateful I am to you ! You know what she was to me—more, perhaps, this last year than ever ;—but God has been very, very good. I had no idea that I could have been helped as I have been. May our Lord be with you and your wife and the little one.

Believe me, my dear Myers,
Ever yours affect.,
George H. Wilkinson.

Part of the widower's time at Chagford was spent in writing down for the benefit of his youngest child a kind of memoir of the mother who had been taken from her, that the child might not

grow up a complete stranger to her. He noticed first her kindness.

She always said this was a natural inheritance from her father, and she used often to speak of his benevolence as shown in the effort which he made to save a poor dog out of the hands of a master by whom he was ill-treated. For myself, recognising as I do the same God as God of nature and of grace, I do not feel it important to separate the one from the other. Some traits may come under the head of natural kindness, others belong more fitly to the supernatural Love of which I shall afterwards speak. She could not endure cruelty to animals. She first thought of the cabmen through her desire to get rugs for the poor shivering horses. It caused her real pain to see the bearing reins used.

She was very thoughtful for others. If I gave money in some cases, she thought of the trifles which I had forgotten, and upon which so much of human happiness depends. It was she who thought of Mr. R. having no breakfast, of the poor seeing our good dinner pass through the hall if they were waiting to speak to me. It was real pain to her, and she never allowed it to happen if it could possibly be avoided. She could not enjoy her dinner unless the blinds were drawn down, to prevent the cabmen, who had no dinner, from feeling the difference between our comforts and their hungry, shivering life. She always took care at the Work Society that the poor should not be kept waiting. She used to make them so happy by her bright smile and kind words. The tea for old people in 1877 was an instance of this. The crossing-sweepers' dinner. The poor man who never got any gratuity, who cleaned the boots at Folkestone—any poor helper generally forgotten at hotels—these she ever loved especially to remember. Even this last year, in all her suffering, she gave herself up to the Z——s, when they came to London, and tried to make them feel that she had not altered because years had passed since she left Auckland.

That which was found in her dealings with the poor appeared also in relation to others. I remember how tenderly she cared for Mr. F., ill and lonely at St. Moritz. On August 19, much as she liked to have me at home, greatly as she disliked adding to my work, she begged me to go to Lady W. and pay her a visit, because she was quite alone in London and not well. Someone speaks of her 'sympathy with the joys and sorrows of others.'

She entered so into them that she would cry over their troubles, and by that love unlocked and softened many hearts.

It was, however, on her children and her husband that all her love was concentrated. She said, 'I love you so deeply that I have none left for anyone else.' This made her doubly keen in seeing our defects. She was so intensely happy when any of the children did or said a loving thing to her. How can I write or speak of all that ever-deepening love to me, or thank God that it did so flow on in an ever-increasing stream to the end! 'I love you more and more.' 'I thought I could not love you more than I did.' Her happiest hours were to be perfectly alone with me. We used to laugh as we sat together in the dining-room at Norwood, and said, 'This is the perfection of happiness.'

This leads me to the highest development of her love, in relation to God. To speak of Him, to feel that He loved her, to sit, as we sat, hand in hand, in the valley behind Crestalta, listening to the music of the winds and saying our *Te Deum*—to say that hymn of praise, as the natural outcome of a thankful heart, unexpectedly, on a holiday or at any other time when we were very happy. God was (especially of late years) in all her thoughts. Her very complaint that she did not love Him as she ought was really the Divine hunger of the soul longing to love Him, whom she really loved, with a more true and deep affection.

She could not bear to hear of anything which unsettled the faith. It was this which made her unable to tolerate Mr. —— when he once spoke unsound words about Eternity in her hearing. She loathed jokes from the Bible, or light words about holy things, especially from the lips of clergymen. It grieved her when I spoke lightly to my sister of a matter about which we had prayed together. It was grief to her if I ever spoke as if the power was in myself. She positively shrank from hearing good people put self forward and so dishonour Christ, taking the glory which belonged to Him.

She had strong faith in prayer. She could not understand the secondary agencies to which Christian people have recourse, ofttimes to the neglect of that Divine help which is covenanted to prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. We prayed together every night of our lives, at home and in a holiday, about servants, children, parish, plans, everything. Latterly I never went out riding without saying a prayer and then giving her a kiss—so was our love for God and for each other blended into one harmonious

whole. Prayer at Holy Communion, prayer everywhere and at all times, was the strength of her life.

Her religion was very simple. She found it hard to make or keep a plan. It was a trial to her to persevere in any plan. She was very honest about it, often telling me that she would rather not have long prayers with me (Mattins, &c.). Even the Guild was a burden to her. All the modern ideas . . . perplexed her. There seemed to her an over-refining, a want of simple application of first principles as revealed in the Bible.

In religion and everything she was intensely *true*. She said that I 'had made her give up humbug,' but her character was true naturally. 'In her presence,' writes one who knew her well, 'the shadow, even, of that which was not quite true seemed to shrivel up. I have so often felt the crookedness of my own heart when it was placed in juxtaposition to hers.' 'I cannot make you a deathbed speech' [she said to her sons]. 'I do not understand those Bible classes.' 'This and that was beyond me.'

She submitted her will to God. It was a strong will, and often the struggle was hard; but He prevailed by the power of the Holy Spirit. To put up with things and places where He had sent or to which He had guided us, to force herself to be kind to those with whom she had no sympathy, because they were good; to give the right portion of our money to God, to obey His will in every detail—this was her standard. It was by this habitual yielding to Him that she gained the submission and resignation with which her long suffering was endured.

She was very nervous. Her organisation was finely strung. Andrew Clark said that all her life electricity in the air, wind, &c., would in spite of all self-restraint affect her. She would so control herself that the children should not see it, but when alone with me, it was very sad at times to witness. She often said, 'I am afraid of going to a new place; much more to a new world.'

She was very natural. There was nothing conventional about her. There was a freshness which in the midst of the stereotyped London world was like a spring of fresh water in a parched and dusty land. 'Why should I not admire my hair?' she said, 'I did not make it.'

'In the world, and yet not of the world.' Under this head [I place] a keen and almost unfailing insight into character. She had a thorough knowledge of society—'an intuitive percep-

tion,' as one has written, 'of the best or right thing to do or say in any difficulty, even when she had to give advice on the moment,' a practical common sense which was like the ballast to my vessel or the rudder which guided me through many a rock, and saved me from many a shipwreck. She loved the beautiful—drew well—had a passionate admiration for the bright colouring of warmer climates—had the power in an hour of quite changing the appearance of a room. . . . She loved to arrange [her drawing-room], and to see pretty things, and to dress her children, simply and inexpensively, but so that it was a pleasure for the eye to rest on them.

She was silent on all matters entrusted to her. This absence of idle talk won for her the confidence of many. 'I know you are safe' was a remark often made to her.

Someone has said of her: '*Life* is the special thought of God which seems to me specially entwined with her—life more abundantly—not a dull, sluggish stream, as with so many of us—a life that seemed to bring life wherever it comes.' Old people loved her. She seemed to force back the current of death. She brought brightness to the dullest dinner. Her evenings at the Vicarage were full of life. She brought people together—asked those who harmonised to meet each other—shed sunshine wherever she went.

In thinking over many years of close intercourse with a saintly personality such as that of the beloved Primus, Mrs. Williamson writes, it is wonderful how 'small forgotten things will steal like stars into the evening sky.' I remember his telling me that once, when feeling greatly depressed some time after the death of his wife, he was driving at night, and came upon a tree half of which was in complete darkness, but the other half bathed in clearest moonlight. He said it struck him like a parable, and that the cloud and darkness of spirit vanished, and he went on his way quite happily—able (I think he said) to rejoice in the Love of God, and the nearness of the Unseen World.

There is no doubt that as long as he lived upon earth the reality of his wife's nearness to him was one of the most important factors in his life.

CHAPTER IX

THE EAST END BISHOPRIC

In the year that followed Mrs. Wilkinson's death, Wilkinson invited his friend, Mr. William Aitken, to give a series of evangelistic addresses at St. Peter's. He was anxious that all sides of Christian teaching should be presented to his parishioners, that he might by all means save some. The subjoined letter

was a reply, Mr. Aitken writes, in a beautiful spirit, to some more or less controversial letter that I had written. I do not now recall what the circumstances were that led me to write the letter, but I think it probable that I had found some of his people building upon the fact of their Baptism and concluding that they were right with God although they seemed to have no very clear apprehension of what Evangelicals understand by the word 'conversion.' I think that under the influence of some such circumstances as this, I may have felt constrained to write to him with all brotherly freedom on the subject. His reply is most characteristic, speaking volumes for the beautiful spirit of the man and of his perfect temper and wonderful humility.

To the Rev. W. H. M. H. Aitken

Antony, Torpoint, Devonport: St. Barnabas Day, 1878.

My dearest Willie,—I have been reading your letter quietly over again here, where I am spending a day by myself on my way to Truro.

Whatever you say to me, only makes me thankful. God knows how manifold are my mistakes, and, so far as I know myself, I desire to know and teach His truth. The difficulty is that what I hold on Holy Baptism has come very slowly to me, and as the result of reading my Bible more than I used to do. I am sure that I ever need to have the side which you mention

pressed on my own soul and to be urged to press it on my people. This is one indirect blessing of such a week as yours.

Many evangelical Christians a little misunderstand my teaching for two reasons :

I. I, of set purpose, do not use words like Conversion, Justification, &c., more than I can help, because they are used in so many senses, and there is the obvious fallacy lying at the door when this is the case. Even in the Bible, regeneration has many senses.

II. I put out with all my strength each truth which God teaches me, without being too careful to dovetail them into each other. I think St. Paul did this. E.g. one time I preach Baptism strongly, at another time almost word for word what you say.

If you have time some day, will you tell me whether you have read any of these books of mine :

'Be ye Reconciled.'
'Instructions in the Way of Salvation.'
'Lent Lectures.'
'Bible Class Teachings on Holy Baptism.'

If not, I will mark a few passages for you to glance at, so as to make sure that you understand what I hold. One sentence in yours as to grace of Holy Baptism being *absolute* makes me a little doubtful on this.

It is impossible to write without appearing to justify myself, but you know, dear Willie, this is not my object. I thank God for every loving word you have said, and most of all for this letter and for what you said about definiteness. It is very, very happy to have you, after so long an interval, feeling and saying and writing as you do.

With much love, ever, my dearest Willie,

Affectly. yours,
GEORGE H. WILKINSON.

This is written very hurriedly, as I have much to think of to-day, but I keep your letter to read again and pray over, and I think *you* will not misunderstand what I have said.

At that very time the Bishop of London once more showed his opinion of Wilkinson, by offering him the position of Suffragan Bishop, with the East End of London as a practically independent sphere of work—the position which was taken a year later by

Mr. Walsham How. Wilkinson had just enjoyed a quiet week with his friends, Mr. and the Hon. Mrs. Kingscote, at the Trench, near Tonbridge, in which many 'visions and revelations of the Lord' had been vouchsafed to him. The offer caused him intense and exhausting anxiety. The agitation which he went through shows how greatly he had been strained by his bereavement and his ever-increasing work. As usual, he set many people to pray for guidance. All the week he was up and praying soon after 6 o'clock. Here are some of his notes :

In the morning [Monday, May 6] was the offer of the Bishoprick. I had become calm and restful, in the spirit of the hymn ('Dead to herself and dead in Him to all beside'). . . . Thoughts of self, ambition, vanity, &c., &c., rose up, but they were not myself. Myself had yielded to Him yesterday.

Tuesday night, Bodington's aversion to the plan. My night of humbling. The evil motives . . . all confessed. Bodington's sudden change and advice to go. Then all was clear as to going till Saturday. In the afternoon came great feverishness. All to pieces. Maclagan's grave doubts whether I was to go. Tom putting before me the immense influence I had here,—the way in which he heard me spoken of by his friends,—the inability of finding any one to succeed me. I was so utterly dead and weary ; yes, dead. The Prayer meeting so terrible. Tears in talking to Maclagan. The misery which I felt as I started to ride. . . . God answered prayer, and gave me blessing with A., who opened his heart to me, May 11. He taught me that He was answering my prayer that I might only suffer if I could learn anything with which to help others. I see the power of *spiritual* suffering. . . .

In His strength, Sunday, May 12, I put it aside. I will try to be silent before the Lord, and leave the question of Andrew Clark's coming with Him. If He will, a week or a fortnight. Let me not be deceived. . . . My spirit says 'Go' ; my judgment says 'Go' ; but I am weak, ignorant, helpless, crushed. Oh Lord, undertake for me! Thou carest for my children, for St. Peter's. Thou knowest all my sins, negligences, and ignorances. I will trust, I will glorify Thee out of the midst of the fire. . . .

Then came dread of leaving, love for place and people. Broken in spirit, I knelt and prayed in that pulpit, May 12. So far as I know myself, everything vanished, and that text came 'I am in a strait—I shall abide.' . . . He taught me . . . how

unbelieving I had been as to grace to continue in St. Peter's. But all that was taken away. . . . I rested on Him, abiding in Him. So far as I know myself, I desire simply to do God's will. If HE had no will and I were to choose, I should remain, and in the midst of my people find the fulfilment of His promise, 'Behold, I come quickly.'[1]

Monday, May 13.—Then Ashwell came. . . . He strongly deprecated my going . . . Suggested [another name]. This idea possessed me. Thankfully believed God would give help and strength, and that I might rest and work in St. Peter's.

Morning, May 14.—Broke down talking to Lyte. . . . At last I solemnly, and (I think) truly, put myself into His hands. . . . I knelt very quietly in the Spirit. I pleaded quietly the covenant in the name of Jesus Christ. . . . I saw my ignorance of God's plans. He may will me by staying in St. Peter's to help on foreign missions . . . or it may be that by Bennett and Maclagan and myself and Fleming and others He has witnessed to the West and wills His witness to be given to the East. . . . 'The secret things belong to the Lord our God.' With no will, in the name of Jesus Christ, depending on the Holy Ghost, I cast myself on Him. . . . He will preserve me from all misgivings. He will guide me with His counsel. To develop St. Peter's—Aitken's and Bishop Webb's work. . . . He will not fail, nor let me fail. To suffer—outwardly fail or outwardly succeed. His will shall be done—here, or if I go, to live or die; He who loves me, loves my children, numbers the hairs of their head, and mine—will provide for body, mind, refinement, education, all. I must now no more try to interpret, nor look beyond, nor be disquieted, but read, mark, learn, inwardly digest. However much I fail and sin, have faith, —not look beyond the hour. . . . N.B.—Do common duties—children, house, sick, &c.

In a very interesting letter, Mr. Aitken has kindly responded to an inquiry with regard to those words in Wilkinson's estimate of the situation in which he speaks—as he frequently did at that period—of 'Aitken's work' as one of the reasons against his leaving St. Peter's.

I cannot feel quite sure, he says, what it was that these entries would refer to. But I have a distinct recollection that

[1] At all times, but especially about that period, Wilkinson was much occupied with thoughts and hopes of the nearness of the Second Advent.

just at that time,—while, in fact, I was holding a mission in his Church—the nomination to the Suffragan Bishoprick of Bedford was on the *tapis*, and he consulted me as to whether he should take it or decline it. I was strongly in favour of his taking it. I remember saying to him, 'You are the one man that can bring the West to the East, and how to do that is the great problem of the times.' I have an entry in my diary: 'Drove off with Wilkinson to see Maclagan,' who was at that time already Vicar of Kensington. I remember that visit particularly well. It was to discuss this point that we met, and after Wilkinson had expressed himself as just waiting for guidance, he left us, and Maclagan and I went on talking .... I recall the consideration that weighed with Maclagan, which was, that Wilkinson ought to be ultimately a Diocesan Bishop, and that if he accepted the Suffragan Bishoprick, Suffragans were never made Diocesans. I have often recalled this conversation in the light of subsequent events. The very man who became Bishop of Bedford was afterwards Bishop of Wakefield, and now a quondam Suffragan is Bishop of London. I well remember the close of the incident, which left a deep impression on my mind. Owing to the length of our discussion I had not left quite enough time to get from Kensington to Eaton Square, and consequently a large congregation were kept waiting for about ten minutes after the time for the service to begin. I rushed into the vestry, snatched at my cassock, and tore off my things with every symptom of hurry. Wilkinson approached me with his own quiet smile on his face, and laying his hand on my shoulder said, 'My dear brother, God has plenty of time for whatever He wants to do through us, so don't you be hurried.' How often has that gentle reproof come back to me in subsequent years, when I have been a bit flustered!

It was not till the end of May that Wilkinson received Dr. Andrew Clark's answer, and even then the answer was not sufficiently clear to relieve him of responsibility. On June 1, he wrote to the Bishop of London, telling him what Dr. Clark had said, and appealing to the Bishop to decide for him.

Eight years ago, he said, when I was in similar perplexity, you were kind enough to decide the question for me. I regarded your decision as that of my Father in God. I accepted it without any misgiving. I have found it an unspeakable comfort in the midst of my St. Peter's work to know that I was deliberately

sent here by him who was over me in the Lord. It will be a great relief, if you will now tell me either to remain at St. Peter's or go to the East of London.

I have consulted a large number of friends, all of whom were men whose judgment you would, I think, have considered worthy of being carefully weighed. They are so balanced that in the aggregate they have given me very little practical help in forming a decision, though they have enabled me to count the cost of adopting either alternative to an extent for which I am heartily thankful. . . . It was said, *before* Dr. Andrew Clark's letter arrived, by one well able to form a judgment, that I was unequal to the peculiar difficulties of this work. . . To this it has been answered that my knowledge of working-men in the north, added to the influence which God has given me in the west of London, taken in conjunction with the way in which the younger clergy have always been drawn round me,[1] marked me out as specially fitted for this new and difficult work. . . . On the other hand I am urged to consider my position in St. Peter's, to remember that Mr. Maclagan and I occupy a position which is in a sense unique, that I have had the confidence of the laity given me by God, that this of all times (when Mr. Maclagan is withdrawn [2]) is not the time for me to leave my present post, that it would be easier to find a Bishop for East London than a successor for myself, &c. . .

I have been obliged to write, and let others write, much about myself, but I have tried not to *think* of myself, but only to write as in God's sight.

The Bishop, as was perhaps natural, refused to decide for him a second time. His letter reached Wilkinson in the west of England, where he was conducting a retreat. 'I asked God,' he notes, 'whether I should consult anyone, or take any more steps. He said *No*. . . . He sent me back to St. Peter's. Believe. Be not careless. Be still and do not make haste. I will lead thee by a way that thou knowest not.'

[1] An Association of the Junior Clergy of London, which was formed in 1872 or 1873, had made him one of their patrons, along with Dr. Lightfoot, Charles Kingsley, and some others.

[2] Mr. Maclagan was consecrated Bishop of Lichfield on June 24 of that year. Wilkinson preached the sermon at the consecration.

CHAPTER X

ILLNESS AND ITS FRUITS

In the year 1879 Wilkinson had what he called his 'first great illness.' He had felt severely the strain of his work during the first half of the year. He had bad nights. From time to time this caused him intense depression. On March 7, he writes: 'Terrible; nearly broken, body and soul.' On St. Peter's Day he broke down so far as to say that he wished that he were dead. A holiday in Switzerland, in August and September, brought him refreshment of mind. He went again to places which he had visited with his wife, found the spots where she had sat and sketched, and felt her at his side again. But in bodily health he seemed to gain little. He was taken ill at Chamounix on September 25. He went to Geneva next day and saw a doctor. He was in terrible pain, but he travelled to Paris on the 30th, and on Friday, October 3, crossed to Folkestone, where the kindest of friends, Mr. and Mrs. F. A. White, took him into their house and put him to bed. 'In my bed till further notice,' he records: 'every trifle so tenderly cared for.' 'Thanksgivings at least a hundred a week; things found for me; people sent the moment that I asked; such fellowship and tender love. The thought of His knowing the future. The rest within, and morbid thoughts put away.' 'Some days of greater happiness than I have ever had; then days of darkness and desolation; . . . power to pour it all before Him.' It was not till December 22 that Dr. Andrew Clark pronounced him well again, and allowed him to resume work.

Always eager to profit by his own experiences, and to use them for the profit of others, he made full notes of the

Needs and teachings and temptations of illness.

Unloving thoughts—hasty—rude. Dwelling on self (partly necessary)—talking to self, &c. Human dependence on medicine, doctor. To show or to repress feeling in a selfish way. Morbid spirituality ; unreality ; as if we liked it. Plans for the suffering life, or life of health ; *to-morrow*—break law of day by day. Dwelling on likes and dislikes.

Puzzling, how far to make great effort to get relief, . . . or to do what doctor ordered as expression of God's will. A pleasure in dwelling on being *invalid*. Inability to *feel* spiritually, or excitement (spiritual). Hard thoughts of self.

Glorify God—submit—' Thy will '—' learn obedience '—not deliberately to keep a bit of self. Do I dislike having things done for me by my children, or illness known, or to be pitied by certain people ? Great remedy, faith. Not ' why ? why ? ' We cannot tell, but God knows. Let it bring its fruit—St. James ; ask for ' wisdom,' ' endurance,' and if God will, deliverance—secret things known only to Him—our sin—good of others—' fellowship of His sufferings.' Much dwelling on His Blood—above all, Holy Communion. Be prepared for usual and old sins specially pressing. Inability to fix thoughts, or keep out thoughts.

Needs. Loving response—reverence—day by day—submission—to trust God, and not to think of effect of one's conduct on others too much. This thought, ' If only I were sure it was for God's glory and good of others I should be happy ; but is it for my own sin merely ? and am I learning the lesson, and shall I learn the lesson, and is the will yielded ? St. Paul was triumphant in consciousness of his own pure intention, offenceless conscience—but I am nervous and depressed, and afraid to claim bright side '—answer to all this is character of God. Like generous, loving father, mother, husband, He will keep, take, find will. He will teach as much of meaning as He sees fit. The full meaning will be revealed after. No one stands except on Blood of Christ. Pray for faith. Do not dwell on cause of sickness. Thank, praise, seek for faith, and leave all to Him. He wishes to bring good out of it. It is unbelief to think that He who took upon Him nature of sinners will not use and bless them, and after forgiveness will not employ them in numberless ways, teach them to teach, give power to prayers for others, &c., &c. *All* things for

good. Faith consists in not asking why. If it is good for me, I shall some day be told,—meanwhile, Visitation of Sick. The above is really a subtle desire to have a righteousness to depend upon instead of 'Just as I am.' . . .

Sympathy with and power to comfort others learnt—poor, suffering, all who are laid aside. It is a strange feeling in a dark lonely night to see only your sin.

How the sick depend on nurses,—frightened of them! How important it is not to be unpunctual with the sick! How they value a little attention—a little common chit-chat. You cannot read, or think, or pray, beyond a certain amount. Then odds and ends, and bits of letters, &c., are very restful.

How I need my future life to be ordered by God for His glory—re-arranged, if need be! How I need to think of the secret inner life, the parts of my work which are only known to God! How I need to learn from Him how to make full proof of my ministry—what to do and leave undone! How important to make Bible a guide: e.g. on October 22, when I prayed for patience, how every temptation came up, just as Bible teaches us to expect!

How little a sick man can fix his thoughts in prayer! What a comfort a doctor's visit is to people! How the tendency to think of self, talk of self, ailments, &c., springs up! Not to say to people, 'This is a good time' (it may be bad for them). How awful it is to be weak and nervous and *alone!* Thought of morrow, comfort of Jesus. He must have felt this and this. . . .

Visitation of Sick, especially sermon and two first prayers, very helpful. Mattins and Evensong when strength allows. Spiritual Communion every day if strength allow. Readiness to give up all, prayers, &c., &c., and lie quite still, when weary. When able really, see what Bible says about Jesus Christ, who manifests the Father—His words in storm on sea, &c., &c. N.B.—Do not be bound in illness by any system. Re-adapt it. Use it as long as you can, but be ready to give all up, and to be led any way He wills.

Sometimes a whole day of failure and even sin, and then at end, or after, you get peaceable fruit in being able to sympathise with one class of pain, or you know our Lord's pain better, or you have learnt one new lesson.

Two short letters of the period give examples of the way in which he applied this experience.

To an ailing Clergyman

2 Grosvenor Gardens, S.W. : June 27, 1882.

I do indeed pray for you, my dear Mr. ——. I beseech you, however, not to take any step without careful thought. I know so well how voices speak, and sudden steps are taken, and peace follows, and then in after years we look back and see that from beginning to end it was Satan acting on an overwrought system. I do not say that it is so in your case. God forbid—but it may be.

To the wife of the same

2 Grosvenor Gardens, S.W. : Oct. 31, 1882.

MY DEAR MRS. ——,—I trust to you to tell me *quite* honestly—Will it do your husband any harm (stop his sleeping, &c.) if I do not go to-night but wait till to-morrow about 6 P.M. ? Do not take the trouble of writing a letter, but just put inside an envelope ' Come,' or ' To-morrow.'

Ever yours,
G. H. W.

This experience was applied on a wider scale in connexion with the Society of Watchers and Workers, which took its rise about this time.

That Society was not indeed founded by him ; but as soon as he learned of its existence and character, he attached himself eagerly to it, and soon became its chief guide, and remained so to the end of his life. Miss Edith Jacob, sister of the present Bishop of St. Albans, writes thus in the February number of the ' Watchword ' for 1908 :

In the autumn of 1878, a few of my own friends, one a great invalid, warmly welcomed an idea that had been in my mind for some years while living as an invalid at health resorts, namely, the desirableness of enrolling for intercession and mutual ministry invalids of the educated classes in some union which should be reckoned among other guilds of Church workers, and so not only to add an immense force to the Church, but to develop and use the gifts of many an invalid now crushed by isolation and a sense of uselessness who might in this way receive the impulse of new life and hope. . . . Months passed and many

difficulties arose, chief of which was a desire to obtain spiritual help for invalids needing special guidance, through experienced priests accustomed to this work, not necessarily the parish priest of the invalid. A pamphlet giving an outline of the proposed guild fell into the hands of Canon Walsham How, then about to become Suffragan Bishop for East London, and he asked to become one of these suggested Priest-Chaplains, writing a short letter in the 'Guardian' to make the Guild known; and Canon Wilkinson, then Vicar of St. Peter's, Eaton Square, hearing of this plan, hesitated to take notice of us till he learned that 'the Bishop of Bedford's scheme' was ours. He was then working at the highest pressure, and receiving letters at the rate of 1000 a month, but I received the following from him: 'I am greatly interested, but do you know that raw haste is half-sister to delay?' Being assured that raw haste was the last thing we could be accused of, he wrote again: 'When and where shall we meet?' Now no thought of a meeting had entered our minds. We had intended in silence and humility to steal into the world on August 6, and above all to beware of Belgravia; but here was a suggestion not lightly to be forgone, and we asked to be allowed to meet at St. Peter's on Thursday, August 6 [1879], the Festival of the Transfiguration. We were warmly welcomed, and a class room of the Infant School was offered for our meeting afterwards.

We therefore quickly arranged to meet our friends there. The Vicar was not able to be present at the Celebration, but asked to see me before it. In this interview he told my sister Gertrude and me how the plan of this Guild had touched him. He had been working out the very same idea for his own parish, but he saw that we should meet a widespread need, and should go all over the land. He laid special stress on the chaplain part of the scheme, regarding it as absolutely necessary and very important. We should try and hear of holy priests, skilled in dealing with souls in difficulties of faith and life, and get their help. . . . Then we knelt, and he offered one of those simple, childlike prayers that none who once heard could forget, beginning with thanking God that we '*have* come to Mount Zion.'

From that time he seemed to adopt the new Guild as his own, always speaking of it as '*our* work,' '*we* must,' &c., and though Bishop Harold Browne was President, he became at once our spiritual head. The first 'Watchwords,' January and February, came out in February 1880, and intercessions for March were

written by him. The work grew apace, and difficulties were many, but after two years the work of supplying intercession subjects was the greatest. Editor after editor resigned under the plea of a fresh mind being advisable, till at length, almost in despair, I obtained a few minutes' interview with the Vicar at St. Peter's, and told him [that] the strain of the 'Watchword' and Intercessions, and keeping in touch with some 200 invalids and others, mostly strangers, was more than I could stand, but the thing I was most anxious about was the monthly Intercessions and Praise. 'Write to me after August 22 to Mürren,' was his answer, and after a little prayer and soothing words I went away. The answer to my statement was a remarkable letter of five or six large pages, dealing with the whole question of our invalids, their vocation, ministry, and needs, and I was to return it to him for use in his own parish, for 'every parish ought really to make this regular provision for its suffering members.' The opening paragraphs were as follows :

'If I understand rightly, the Watchers and Workers are a Society of persons in sorrow, need, sickness or other adversity, who believe that those on whom God's Hand has been thus laid have a special work to perform and special trials to endure. This wide definition includes (1) those who are enduring *bodily* pain, (2) those whose *minds* are sorely tried by the special fiery darts of the 19th century, (3) those whose *hearts* have been wounded by bereavement or unkindness, whose lives have from any cause lost much of their music, (4) those who are tried by long spiritual trial, or tempted by sudden darts of temptation as from some fiery furnace which burns the life out of the *spirit*, even when they are resisted and conquered. All these and many others have a place in our Society. Why they have joined is known only to God and their own hearts. All we ask is that they be included in this comprehensive class (in sorrow, need, &c.), and have been enabled by God to believe that they have a special work to do, and have received strength to resolve, God helping them, that this work shall not be left undone. This work is mainly (1) to praise God, (2) to intercede and thank God for answered prayers, (3) to glorify God by patient or joyful endurance, (4) to help other sufferers. I do not write again the thoughts contained in the Festival address at St. Peter's. There is the double life. Sometimes we can hardly endure, and yet, at the same time, or soon after, we have faith to mention a name or a need in prayer to God, or to ascribe glory to God for His

absolute power, or to praise His Holy Name. It may be that for an entire month the faith is not strong enough for number 1 and 2. This is the double side. What then have we to provide for our band of suffering workers? . (1) Subjects for praise. (2) Intercession and thanksgiving. (3) Texts and thoughts which experience has proved to be of use in comforting the soul and bracing it to patient endurance, names of books which experience has proved useful for mourners, for the spiritually tempted, for those whose bodies are racked by agonising pain, or worn out with protracted sickness.'

How to provide these subjects for praise and thanksgiving was then dealt with. Subjects for Praise. We were to send a circular every Festival time ' to those Priests of God most likely by their habits of life to furnish subjects. Unknown men as well as those whose names are known to the Church would respond.' I was to select, ' with a small band of referees who really cared for the work,' e.g. himself and the Bishop of Bedford, to whom I might write in difficulty. Subjects for Intercession and Thanksgiving should be sought by sending a similar circular to clergy who prepared Intercessions for their parishes, asking them to send us their general petitions. We could collect from these lists month by month. Lastly, every member might be invited to send ' any subject for which he desired prayers fraught with the special power which seems given in Heaven to the prayer of weakness and suffering.'. . .

From the day when he welcomed us to St. Peter's, Eaton Square, for our founding, strangers as we were, with one exception, he may be said—the Report of the Society for 1907 says—to have adopted us as one of his own Guilds. We were on his mind and heart, and knew that at every turn of the unknown way he was there, waiting to help, never too occupied to hear and weigh the matter in question. . . .

A letter written early in 1883 deals with four questions submitted to Canon Wilkinson, of which the last two were (1) whether we should try and carry out the suggestion of a well-known priest by a form of prayer or offices for daily use, to which the answer was: ' Too difficult at present, at all events,' and (2) as to the wisdom or otherwise of refusing to deal in the ' Watchword ' with questions on which there were differences of opinion, e.g. Fasting Communion for the sick, Prayers and offering the Holy Eucharist for the departed. To this the answer was:

'Not to be touched, at all events at present, because (*a*) very difficult, as needing explanation, (*b*) we might *divide*, and we wish to *unite*. Each year will win you more confidence. Now as to question three. Here I see a germ for the future. We must try and get every month a very short statement which will give interest to *one great Intercession*. For instance . . . let all the Watchers and Workers pray for the [newly appointed] Archbishop this month. Then I will write a short paper asking those who have got any help from the Bible Readings to pray for Truro and for St. Peter's. Then in April the Bishop of Bedford would do the same for East London. In May Mr. Rosenthal for the Jews. You see what I mean. Poor souls —almost dead, stirring up their wills to obey Isa. lxii. 6, need indeed bracing, but almost more, sympathy and the help which comes by giving a few thoughts which clothe the dry bones with flesh. . . . Thank you for letting me help.' . . .

In 1885, when Canon Wilkinson had become Bishop of Truro, we appealed to him to write a paper in the 'Watchword' to help those who were being troubled by so-called Faith Healers who maintained that only want of faith prevented cure. From Lis Escop, Truro, March 23, 1885, he wrote:

'I wish that I had time to help you about the Faith Healing, but I fear that I have not. I suppose that their mistake is forgetting that all prayer is to be made in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ—in His Character—after His Example—with recognition of God's wider range—infinite knowledge—ability to decide what is best, and with complete submission to His Will . . .

'There is no doubt, I suppose, that the power to heal is as great as it ever was, and applies to body as well as soul; but we are only *promised* that the quiet Peace of God shall guard our hearts if in everything we make known our needs to Him. If it is good for us, and does not interfere with God's great designs for the invalid, &c., &c., God will answer the prayer and heal the sick. If it does, the prayer will not be answered, but the Peace will come. I have found both sides verified:—(1) Prayer answered, sick healed. (2) Prayer not answered, sick not healed, but perfect peace and happy surrender poured into the soul. So far as I can judge, the faith in (1) and (2) was equally strong.'

An interesting example of the combination of the practical and the spiritual so characteristic of our President is shown in a letter written in 1898, when the death of our dear Hon.

Secretary, Miss Gertrude Jacob, made fresh arrangements necessary for carrying on the Society's business. He wrote:

'As regards committees in relation to "Watchers and Workers," I have no facts on which to form an opinion. As regards committees in general, I have long made up my mind. I dislike the bother of them, and believe they consume (not waste) much time. But the dear Archbishop and I used to agree that in the nineteenth century, if they are done prayerfully and reverently and with a good business hold on the members, they afford the material by which the Holy Ghost develops in the Body of Christ the spirit of counsel. I now delight in them, and find they reveal defects and develop spiritual life in a wonderful way, both for chairman and for members.'

The only return we could make for all this patient care and teaching lay in offering the intercessions he from time to time entrusted to us, whether for his diocesan or personal needs, and he loved to connect these prayers with the wonderful blessing that crowned his efforts to make St. Ninian's Cathedral and much else more worthy of the Lord he loved and served. As we think of him now, the closing words of a letter, written on St. Bartholomew's Day, 1899, are good to read:

'The body of our humiliation refuses at times to respond to the will of the quickened spirit. What a strange sensation it will be, please God, to find ourselves in an environment where not only all labour is joy, but where it involves no reaction. Meanwhile our Lord understands it all, and times of weakness are often —though unknown to ourselves—times in which His power is specially exerted for the work which we are unable to do.'

The work of this Society was so intimately connected with Wilkinson's whole life and thought, that no apology is needed for giving yet one more extract from its papers. Miss Jacob writes in the 'Watchword' for January 1908:

For twenty-eight years our President has been a real father to us. He bore us on his heart, believed in us and our mission when others doubted it, and with a father's heart and hand watched over and guided us. His tenderness and understanding run like a thread of gold through the goodness and mercy which have followed us since we met on his invitation . . . at St. Peter's, Eaton Square, to found 'a new guild for invalids,' for which the prayers of the congregation were asked. . . .

Perhaps the account of an interview with him that has never yet been related may be accepted as a small tribute to his strange power to bless and guide his children.

It was in 1894, when he had recovered from his long sad illness that for the first time for several years he came among us and preached at our Anniversary, and spoke at the meeting, after which he came back to the Hostel with several Watch-Sisters. It suddenly occurred to us to ask him to say a few special words to us, and he seemed pleased at the suggestion. Never can we forget that time. After he was gone, each one present was asked for the sake of the absent to write down her recollections, and the following fragments are the result. He began:

'I will not give you new thoughts, we have had as many as we can digest, but will try to deepen those given us. There is the *New Song*, and *Thanksgiving*, and *Patience*, patience not in the meaning of submission, but patience with others. Be very patient with your invalids. It is so tedious, so depressing, I have felt it myself, to hear the same story of wakeful nights and bodily ailments time after time. Be patient with their dulness and slowness to learn spiritual things, if after months of effort you find them still at the same level. Think of God's patience with us and how little we have advanced since He first began with us years ago. Do not expect of others more than you expect of yourself. Think of God's patience with the world, His waiting more than 2000 years for the Incarnation; think of our Lord's patience with the Apostles, with St. Peter; so that St. Peter's fall into nearly hopeless sin seemed almost needed to show us the wonderful patience of that love that watched over him all through his training and his fall. . . . Remember what you *are* is of far more importance than what you *do*. If *you* are right, the work will take care of itself. Think of our Blessed Lord's Life; how busy He was, and yet *never* in a hurry; always at leisure for all who came to Him. . . . Help invalids to *fight* disease, for disease weakens, and all that weakens is of the devil. The greatest saint I ever knew was a young man who told me that he had studied his Bible and seen clearly that disease is of the devil, and the devil should have no dominion over him. He had been fighting disease inch by inch for twenty years, and meant to fight it to the end. But when friends and doctors are agreed that nothing can avail, then, even if that most terrible thought comes to

you—a suggestion of Satan—"What else can be expected? Do you suppose God is going to work a miracle for you?" when he suggests that because we have failed in the past, the work we have tried to do has failed; that because of our sin 'the child shall die,' then say the Name of Jesus; with your whole *will* say 'I trust Him, I *will* trust Him; it *must* be best; it is best.' It may be that we shall have only a few days more in which to trust. Remember it is only in this life we can honour God by trusting Him. . . . One hour of eternity and we shall look back and see it all plainly, and shall say, "Of *course*! I see it now, what a fool I was!"'

Then we knelt round him, like the children in Overbeck's picture of our Lord blessing the little ones, and he knelt and prayed like a child at its mother's knee. Of that prayer we could recall only a few words. It began, 'My Saviour,' spoken softly with the deepest tenderness and reverence, as though He were close by, and ended . . . 'and bless all who arranged the meeting, all who spoke, and *these*. One by one they were baptised; one by one they have been confirmed; one by one Thou art leading them with individual love. Ye shall be gathered *one by one*, O ye house of Israel.' . . . It was a revelation of prayer, as his prayers always were. After this he rose and laid his hands in turn on each head using at least two blessings, then both hands resting on the Warden-Sister (whom he had passed over before), he said the high-priestly blessing; then shook hands with each and was gone.

Four of that little band have passed away, perhaps even now may be speaking with him of those deep things of God he taught them here, and which angels desire to look into. 'What a life of service may they have begun who are freed from the burden of a corruptible body. *His servants shall serve Him*' are the closing words of a letter written in 1880. Let us give thanks for him and pray for grace to endure all things and attain in God's own time that glorious life of service and union.

His sympathy for sufferers in those days is shown in the following letters to Mrs. Williamson, who became a complete invalid soon after her marriage.

Pavilion Hotel, Folkestone: March 12, 1875.

MY DEAR CARRIE,—I must not let your birthday pass without wishing you many happy returns of it. Each year must make

you feel how truly our Lord is leading you on in the narrow way which leads to life. From that day at Auckland when He, who had been all your life loving you, was so manifested to you that your will was yielded to Him—from that day amid all the ups and downs and ebbings and flowings of the spiritual life—He has never left you, and you, thank God, have—imperfectly indeed—but most truly responded to His will. The strength of every life is in the thought of Him. Like the waves of the changing sea, like the fitful gleams of sunshine cast athwart the grassy sward, *our* sensations alter. We seem at times so near to Him, and then in a very little so far away. But He is the same yesterday and to-day and for ever, and my happiness for you, my child, is the certain knowledge that He is with you—helping, guiding, strengthening you. God bless you, dear Carrie, now and ever.

Your friend and Pastor,
GEORGE H. WILKINSON.

2 Grosvenor Gardens, S.W.: March 12, 1878.

You must have a little note on your birthday. It will be a very thankful and yet a sad one, but the thankfulness will prevail, for it is a joy—is it not?—to be able to give up something, and the natural longings are the materials for the sacrifices—the 'treasure of countless price' which God provides for sacrifice. 'Sorrowful (in a sense) yet always rejoicing'—this is the idea of life, is it not? I thank God that I see you steadily growing and His hand evidently upon you in love and power. God bless you.

Roughton Rectory, Norwich: Aug. 17, 1880.

First you will want to know about ourselves. We are here (D.V.) for five weeks more—no work—only a Rectory rented. . . . If you have any strength for extra prayers, you will ask God to guide me about the education of my little girls. I am rather puzzled. I need not worry you with details. Then I want a really good curate, as Mr. Lester and (probably) Mr. Storrs have got livings. Mr. Scott has come back well and bright from China. He is not a bit altered, except that his mind has become so much stronger and his grasp of things so much firmer.

Now, dear Carrie, about yourself. All illness and solitary life, especially the kind of illness which you have had, causes a loss of nerve power. The effect of this is fear, not only of the

natural objects of dread, but nervousness about the future, about illness, and dark morbid feelings about God. All the shrinking from pain and weakness and illness are simply in doctor's language the want of nerve force. They are simply to be borne like St. Paul's thorn in the flesh. They are the dying of the Lord Jesus which the same Apostle says he carried about with him day by day. It made his life very heavy to bear, but he took it as a trial given him by our Lord, and he knew that in some strange way the more he endured of this daily dying, the more of life would flow out to others (2 Cor. xii. 15). So I see it with you,—*you suffering* till the old self is dead and the new life triumphs (in *this* world I mean); *you suffering*, but through your pain life flowing out into Arthur's [1] own soul and into his ministry. Day by day to take the dark depression as a trial given to us and to make us desire our Lord's advent—this is your life for the present. Then, please God, next year, as I have been allowed in this past summer, you will have the joy of helping others and finding that all which you have endured has made you more fit to be a priestess of our God in His Holy Church. You will say to many a one 'I know what you mean. I have felt it.' . . .

Mr. Body would not have given you that text if he had known how weak you were. He would have chosen the text which Cara loved so dearly, and which carried her through so many an hour of agony and so many a dark time, when the feeling of her sin and unworthiness was too much for her—'He shall feed His flock like a shepherd. He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and shall gently lead those that are with young.' She used to say that when she could neither pray nor love nor feel, that last clause taught her that Jesus *knew* and made allowance for her. God bless you.

Hôtel des Bains, Boulogne-sur-Mer: 16 Sept., 1881.

I have got your long letter here, and am very glad that you were well enough to write so fully. You know how I feel for and with you. It is to you the hardest trial which could have come to you. But you know now that He gives us His Cross in the very forms which He knows are *real* crosses to us. The old nature dies—as He died. That which we were by nature—peace-makers, centres of happiness, &c.—*dies* as the corn of wheat dies—or rather appears to die, as it passes out of sight in order

[1] Her husband.

that it may reappear in a glorious resurrection form. If by God's help we hold fast in humble submission and childlike trust to our Lord, while the dying is being accomplished, then our prayers for others have tremendous power in His Name, and either here or hereafter we find that we, like our Lord, have lifted up those for whom we prayed by His own resurrection force. We have had a wonderful holiday and have been very very happy. . . .

Mention has been made, near the beginning of this chapter, of Mr. and Mrs. Kingscote and their beautiful home in Kent. It was one of the chief refreshments of Wilkinson's life, especially during the years that followed his bereavement, to pay a visit to the Trench. Every Easter, it was a fixed and regular institution for him and all his eight children to spend a fortnight there, riding about the country, and taking part in the services held in the chapel, where Mr. Kingscote officiated as a licensed Reader for the benefit of his household and the neighbours also. No man was more fortunate in his friends than Wilkinson. He received back in ample measure into his bosom the affection which he unstintingly gave forth.

CHAPTER XI

CHURCH DIFFICULTIES

The Ritual troubles, which so acutely distressed the Church of England at large in the decade from 1870 to 1880, were brought home in an especial manner to Wilkinson's heart, in the latter half of that decade, over and above his general solicitude for the Church's welfare. The unhappy Public Worship Regulation Act had been passed in 1874. Towards the end of 1876 a prosecution was brought against his much loved and honoured friend, the Rev. Charles Bodington. In deference to the wishes of his diocesan, Mr. Bodington had abandoned the use of the Eucharistic vestments, and was attacked only for taking the Eastward Position, for having lighted candles on the altar, and other things which are now widely adopted.[1] Mr. Ridsdale of Folkestone was under prosecution. Mr. Tooth, of St. James's, Hatcham, was thrown into prison for refusing to recognise the authority of the Court established by the Act, and it seemed probable that Mr. Bodington, who held the same view of that Court, would suffer a similar fate, in spite of Bishop Selwyn's desire to protect him.

Always a peacemaker, Wilkinson was much annoyed by a letter which appeared in the 'Times' on January 26, 1877, signed 'Vicar of St. Peter's,' the writer of which rather pointedly attacked Mr. Fleming, Wilkinson's neighbour in Chester Square, for breaking the law of the Prayer Book. Wilkinson wrote in the paper the next day disclaiming all connexion with the letter. He had, no doubt, long intended to deliver his mind on the subject of the troubles, and on February 4 he preached

[1] See Tucker's *Life of Bishop Selwyn*, vol. ii., pp. 341 foll., and Benham and Davidson's *Life of Archbishop Tait*, vol. ii., pp. 254 foll.

about ' Church Difficulties ' in St. Peter's. Old Lord Chelmsford, who on a former occasion had not agreed with his utterances on another burning topic, now wrote to express his regret that illness had prevented him from listening to a sermon of which he had heard accounts which greatly pleased him.

I trust, he said, it will serve to dissipate every lurking suspicion of your having been in any way concerned with that foolish letter. . . . These are trying times for every clergyman of mark. He is sure to be beset with spies, or aimed at by detractors. I wish some means could be devised to combine the moderate men of both sections . . . so as to prevent the Church, which ought to be ' without seam, woven from the top throughout,' being wholly rent asunder.

Such means Wilkinson was himself busily engaged in devising. The weapons of his warfare were spiritual. He wrote to Mr. Bodington on February 1—the day of his trial :

I have secured a large mass of intercession for to-day, thank God—both at Celebration and privately. So we can leave it all in His hands. I am using your paper privately, as you would wish it used, to try and arouse men's minds to the reality of the present distress.

But he was attempting something on a larger scale as well. Conference and prayer were what he looked to.

That year, as Dean Church wrote to his brother, Wilkinson preached ' to large congregations at our midday short service ' during the first week in Lent.[1] On Shrove Tuesday a private conference of ten men was held at St. Paul's, at which Wilkinson urged that the Bishops of the metropolitan district should be asked to put forth a letter to the clergy inviting them to a Day of Intercession, such as had been blessed by God in connexion with the work of Foreign Missions and with the recent Mission in London. Lent, he thought, would be the most fitting time for such an effort, when Bishops and clergy might gather ' to humble ourselves for manifold sins, negligences, and ignorances ; to acknowledge God's great goodness ; to seek

[1] Dean Church's *Life and Letters*, p. 255.

guidance (Ezra viii. 22).' The time, however, did not commend itself to others, even if they approved of the idea.

On April 4, Mr. Berdmore Compton, Vicar of All Saints', Margaret Street, presented to the Archbishop of Canterbury a petition or address declaring that there would be no peace in the Church, and no possibility of continuing the existing relations between Church and State, unless an authority could be found which would be binding upon the consciences of Churchmen, and that there could be no such authority unless it spoke in the name of the synods of the Church, as well as in that of Parliament. The first among the very numerous and influential signatures which it bore were those of Dean Church and Mr. Gregory, then Canon of St. Paul's. For some reason Wilkinson did not himself sign it, but he set himself busily to work to obtain signatures from the lay members of his flock to an address of similar purport, and he attended the meeting at Mr. Compton's at which the address was drawn up. A note of his remains among his papers, which says :

Compton's, March 1.

How, when all seemed confused, the very words I wanted were embodied in the resolution.

How the Bishop of Ely was sent to me.[1]

How Bodington's trouble was made the means of bringing me to the Archbishop.

How by three days' agony I was prepared for that interview.

How the self was punished.

How I went up stairs saying Psalm 51, and then my lips were opened.

How I was helped to speak truly to the Archbishop and Bishop of Ely.

How I was helped to write with Cara to the Archbishop.[2]

The dreadful preparation for the Lambeth meeting on the Thursday.

On Thursday, April 19, he invited to his own house a gathering of representative men—Mr. A. R. Ashwell, Canon of Chichester, on whose learning and judgment he relied more

[1] Bishop Woodford preached at St. Peter's on January 28, 1877.

[2] On June 19.

at that time than on any other man's; Mr. E. H. Bickersteth, Mr. Carter of Clewer, Mr. Maclagan, Dr. Miller of Greenwich, Mr. Money, Honorary Canon of Rochester, Mr. Randall of Clifton, Mr. Titcomb of Woking (soon afterwards made Bishop of Rangoon), Mr. Scott of West Ham, and some others.

The object, he said, is to consider in a private and brotherly manner the following points:

1. Whether it is desirable to ask the Archbishops and Bishops to set apart a day of fasting and prayer for the guidance of the Holy Ghost under our present difficulties.
2. In what way the expression of the living voice of the Church can be secured.
3. Whether it is possible to obtain a truce between the conflicting parties, so as to allow time for deliberation to the rulers of the Church.

He urged upon this gathering, in his characteristic way, how public confessions and prayers, public humiliations and thanksgivings, were recognised in the Bible. He spoke of the varied influence of the Holy Ghost, and of the direct guidance which is covenanted to those who seek it aright. He met the objection that such an occasion 'would parade our difficulties, and bring down the newspapers upon us, or would fan party spirit.' He contended against the optimistic view that things were not so bad after all, and that people in general did not recognise that it was a critical moment. Some argued that the thing would not be taken up: he replied that even if many held aloof, it would be accepted by God.

It was at a meeting of Clergy and Laity held some time that spring, that Wilkinson read the following paper:

Church Difficulties

I desire to direct your attention to the present anomalous condition of the Church of England.

I am not concerned with historical disquisitions as to the course of events by which she has been brought into this condition. Still less do I desire to apportion the responsibility which has been respectively incurred in this matter by the Church and

Realm. I prefer to consider the facts which are patent to every intelligent observer.

The Church of England has, at present, no means of making the slightest alteration in her Rubrics, or of adapting herself to the needs of the age, without having recourse to Parliament.

From this method of improvement, Churchmen naturally shrink. They prefer to maintain the present state of affairs, rather than allow their Faith to be discussed in a mixed assembly, containing among its members some who have publicly avowed their antagonism, alike to her doctrines, and to her position as established in this kingdom.

Hence has resulted the present anomalous state of affairs. While every other organisation is able to improve its own system—while our political and judicial systems have been continuously modified, while the arrangements of Army and Navy are continually being altered to meet the exigencies of the times, the Church is deprived of all power of adaptation to the ever-changing necessities of each succeeding age.

The whole procedure of the Law Courts is delayed—weeks are spent, by the highest judicial authorities, in investigating the meaning of Rubrics which were framed for the guidance of Churchmen in preceding centuries! No opportunity is given to the Church of answering the question: 'What is best, in each separate instance, in this nineteenth century? In what respects is it desirable to adapt ancient rules, and to contract, or to expand, the liberty which was accorded in the past?'

From this her anomalous condition, the following, among other grave results, have ensued. No one is able accurately to define what is legal and binding upon the consciences of the clergy Many breaches of the Rubric are perpetrated by all sections of the Church. Some are tacitly condoned; others are dragged out into the light, and the offenders dealt with according to the strictest interpretation of the letter of the Law.

The result of this manifest injustice is a growing dissatisfaction, and a sense of irritation, which is weakening the force hitherto exercised in this country by the Law of the land; and I need not point out that one of the gravest evils which can befall any country is a disrespect for Law.

Surely, then, it is the duty of the Houses of Convocation to consider in what way it is expedient and possible to obtain for the Church an increase of liberty in this respect; maintaining, of course, the basis of the three Creeds.

I venture to suggest that Committees of the Houses of Convocation be formed with the least possible delay, so as to secure the special gifts of the Episcopal office, the technical knowledge of experts in theology, and the practical experience of representative parochial Clergy.

When these Committees have decided what, in their judgment, is the Will of GOD, as revealed in His Holy Word and the history of the Church, and have arrived at some conclusion as to the best means whereby these Divine principles can be embodied in action, let them invite Laymen—well affected to the Church, drawn from both sides of the Houses of Parliament—to a *private* Conference. Let the subject proposed to this private Conference be as follows: 'In what way, and to what extent, due regard being had to the rights of the Sovereign and of the State, can the liberty of the Church be secured?'

While the Conference is being held, let days of prayer be privately organised, that GOD the HOLY GHOST may direct those deliberations.

As to the result of such a method of meeting our present difficulty, we dare not entertain any misgivings. It is the method of the Acts of the Apostles, adapted to the nineteenth century. It has been tried, again and again, in our Parishes, and has never been found to fail.

When, on those smaller areas, some grave trouble has arisen, the Communicants are first asked to pray, at Holy Communion, and in their Prayer Meetings, for the guidance of the HOLY GHOST. The Clergy then meet, and endeavour to ascertain the Mind of GOD, and the eternal principles which it is necessary, at every cost, to maintain. They next take counsel with a Committee of Laymen, so as to correct their own mistakes by the practical knowledge thus infused into their consultations. A workable plan is finally adopted, and carried out through the Parish, by the united strength of Clergy and Laity.

Who can doubt that the GOD who, in our Parishes, has so often blessed this combined action of the different members of the one Body, begun in a spirit of dependence on the Blessed SPIRIT, and carried on with the continued recognition of the power of Prayer, would vouchsafe to bless the same method, when employed on the larger area of our National Church?

I abstain from any foreshadowing of the conclusions at which the proposed Conference may arrive. To do this would be to

anticipate the Will of GOD as hereafter to be revealed to the Church, in answer to the prayers of her faithful members.

I only urge that no time must be lost, if the National Church is to be preserved. The under-growth of difficulties is daily increasing. Everywhere, men's minds are being disturbed: a state of feeling is being engendered which is utterly destructive to the higher spiritual life. The progress of Church work, where its advance is most needed, is being seriously checked. The gravest anticipations are everywhere felt as to the effects of the present unsettlement on the Future of this Church and Realm.

We are never likely to have a Parliament more disposed to consider favourably any scheme recommended by the united voice of the Church.

Never has the Church herself been more full of life and energy, than in the present generation. Never has the stream of Prayer ascended in larger measure to the Mercy-seat on High, in the Name of the Incarnate GOD. Never has the Almighty FATHER vouchsafed more evident signs of His Presence, than those which have been granted to the Church in this our day and generation.

Now, if ever, this is the word of the LORD to 'Zerubbabel,' the representative of the Laity, and to 'Joshua, son of Josedech,' the representative of the Priesthood, and to 'all the people of the land:' 'BE STRONG, AND WORK, FOR I AM WITH YOU, SAITH THE LORD OF HOSTS. ACCORDING TO THE WORD WHICH I COVENANTED WITH YOU WHEN YE CAME OUT OF EGYPT, SO MY SPIRIT REMAINETH AMONG YOU: FEAR YE NOT.'

These projects involved him in a great labour of correspondence, but he was encouraged to persevere. Amongst others, the venerated Rector of Clewer wrote to him on June 9, enclosing a letter of Bishop Abraham which contained suggestions in the direction towards which Wilkinson was striving.

I told him, he said, I had sent it to you, and that I thought you, before any other, would be able to do anything practicable with such a proposal. I have consulted Gregory and the Dean of St. Paul's. They feel that having taken the lead in the former memorial they could hardly put themselves forward in another which is of a kindred character. Berdmore Compton remains quiet, watching events. If anyone could move, it would be yourself and any you could influence.

He wrote again on the 23rd :

I regret that I cannot go with you to Lambeth on Wednesday. . . . My best wishes and prayers will be with your efforts, and I shall be thankful to hear what you may hope for. I earnestly trust the effort will not be in vain ; at all events it was a real cause for thankfulness to be drawn together as we were that day at your house. It was very refreshing to meet then prayerfully and kindly those who seem so far off in more public action and paper warfare.

The Archbishop of Canterbury agreed to the proposal of a conference, and Wilkinson, acting as secretary for the purpose, issued invitations to a selected number of clergymen for August 10. He had enlisted the prayers of friends in many places. He spent the 9th as a day of fasting in preparation. It was to him a day of great suffering, with much bodily pain, and such acute depression that he records that he was again and again on the verge of speaking in a way which his delicate conscience regarded as ' blasphemy.' On the 10th the meeting took place. It was of a private nature, and what happened at it never transpired. The ' Guardian ' for August 15 gave a list of those who were present. A more representative list could scarcely have been drawn up. The Archbishop presided, and the Bishops of London, Winchester, Rochester, and Ely were there to support him. The question proposed to the gathering was : ' In what way can the spirit of prayer for the guidance of the Holy Ghost to the Church at the present juncture be best extended and encouraged ? ' Wilkinson sent this account of the meeting to Mr. Carter : [1]

2 Grosvenor Gardens, S.W. : Aug. 17, 1877.

My dear Mr. Carter,—I gladly comply with your request, though I fear that what was said will not much help the special work to which your letter refers. Incidentally men agreed that there are now real differences of opinion which cannot be ignored, but that much might be done by resolutely fixing our minds on the points in which we agree.

It was also brought out how we agree in the Creeds, the

[1] An account will also be found in the *Life of Archbishop Tait*, vol. ii. p. 292 foll.

Incarnation, &c., &c., &c., our main difficulties being with the subjective rather than the objective.

Again it was pointed out that up to a point we all agree; only High Churchmen go further, and receive higher and deeper truths in addition to the common possession.

A suggestion was made as to *Conciones ad Clerum* by men appointed by the Bishops, with a view of explaining to their brethren how men are misunderstood, how often the conclusions which our opponents think must be deduced from certain premises are not actually accepted by the person charged by his opponents with holding them.

The day, however, was mainly devoted (from 11.30–5) to Litany, Holy Communion, and extempore prayer at intervals, and to the consideration of the question of a Day of Intercession. The idea was that God has been educating the Church. In the London Mission He taught her the blessing of Clergy and Bishops meeting (as they did in St. Paul's) for a day of prayer. In the Day of Intercession for Foreign Missions He taught a similar lesson applied to parishes. In every part of the Bible great weight is attached to 'gathering together'—corporate aspect of Church presenting herself before the Lord (Joel, Ezra, Acts of Apostles). Begin with Metropolitan Dioceses. Let the Bishops meet Clergy Friday Oct. 26. Let Bishops as commanding officers give orders (keynote of sermons) in three or four addresses. Sunday 28 (St. Simon and St. Jude) let the Clergy tell the people what the Bishops have said. 31st, on Vigil of All Saints, with light of Paradise around us, let us in our parishes confess sin, thank God, pray for Holy Spirit's guidance, &c., &c., &c.

We all felt that God would guide the Bishops to decide what was relatively best for the Church, and the matter was left in their hands. I enclose you rough notes of the last words of the Bishops. When you have quite done with them, will you kindly return them together with this letter. I shall like to keep it as a rough record of a day which God grant may not have been spent in vain.

May our Lord give you much inward rest and bodily strength while you are away, and enable you to pray in faith and hope for the Church.

Ever, my dear Mr. Carter,

Yours very gratefully,

GEORGE H. WILKINSON.

The meeting was in some sense a disappointment. The Archbishop wrote gracefully and gratefully to Wilkinson about the success of his endeavour; but the Bishop of Winchester (Browne) wrote to him on the 21st:

I confess our meeting at Lambeth did not raise my hopes much. The extreme High Church party was represented only by Mr. West, who took no part. The extreme Low Church party were as usual narrow, ignorant, and unbending. But I am willing to join heartily in anything that can give hope of conciliation. What seems to me so sad is that the one extreme party is as unconciliatory, as opposed to peace and love, as ever—that the other shifts from position to position, and that it is very doubtful if they can ever be fixed.

The Bishop of London wrote to him the same day:

I wish our meeting at Lambeth could have been all prayer and no speeches. Some of those indeed were healing and hopeful; but on the whole they have not tended to display or promote an effort for unity. The 'Broad Church,' as I expected, severed themselves. The Evangelical Clergy were much offended by Dr. —— who divided Churchmen into Evangelical and Orthodox and suggested as the remedy for our divisions lectures for their benefit on the true meaning of the words 'Justification by Faith.' I very much doubt the success of any larger meeting for united prayer at present. But you have touched the right chord, and touched it wisely; and I am sure that with all who believe in the efficacy of prayer—i.e., all but the Broader section—prayer for unity—our Lord's *own* prayer—will go up daily more earnestly, perseveringly, hopefully (even if it be hoping against hope) than it has yet done among us.

This meeting involved Wilkinson in still further correspondence. With all his mind he strove to act as an interpreter between the Bishops on the one hand and the Ritualists on the other. Mr. Villiers, then Rector of Adisham, who had been a friend ever since the time when his father for a little while was Wilkinson's Bishop in the north, aided him in the task. He obtained the opinions of Ritualistic friends upon letters which the Bishops wrote to Wilkinson.

Nothing will be new to you, he writes to Wilkinson on Aug. 15, but as you are trying more than any man to show the Bishops the side of the question at which Ritualists are looking, you may like just to run your eye over it.

A man occupying your position at the present time, Mr. Villiers wrote again on the 19th, has a right to be informed what authority those who are now charged with disobedience would respect.

Mr. Carter wrote again on August 28, returning some letters, and said :

I have been very grateful to you for them, for the love and interest and deep thoughts of the life of God which they give us faint glimpses of. It is well it should be known, and cannot, I think, but have real influence of the truest kind. It seems beginning at a higher point than has been sought before, and must lift up to a higher view the mode of reconciliation which may be yet open to us and the lack of which has been a great deal owing to suspicion and prejudice and misunderstanding and want of prayer to meet and understand each other. I think you may be well thankful to God that it was put into your heart to seek such a mode of closer fellowship. May all truest grace and blessing be vouchsafed, and your work greatly be prospered.

The position which Wilkinson had come to hold about this time in the eyes of religious people may be seen by the following words in a letter from a well-known priest on the Ritualistic side, written on September 12, in solemn and pathetic circumstances :

Let me revert once more to what I said about you and Christ's Church. My mind keeps working round this. It is neither for you nor for me to jump to any conclusion that God is inspiring you in a most special and peculiar way, but, my brother, keep before your mind, and *do not shrink from it,* that :

1. It is just what God has done over and over again in what men call great crises.

2. That there are circumstances about your position with reference to the controversies of the day that lead one irresistibly to the thought that God *may* be so using you now.

3. That men so called have generally recognised their calling, and that apparently God has not thought them presumptuous for recognising it.

And I may add as a sort of clue to what others may be feeling or may come to feel—I suspect it so strongly about you that I should have the greatest difficulty in not following your advice—I should be inclined to believe that God's Prophet was speaking to me.

It was, perhaps, not unwholesome for the man of God that others should take a somewhat different view of his conduct. When fresh troubles arose about Mr. Bodington in 1878, and Wilkinson was endeavouring to mediate between him and the new Bishop of Lichfield, the faithful friend, at one point of the correspondence, wrote in a way which seemed to imply that Wilkinson was guilty of trimming.

It has struck me with astonishment, he said, to see the line taken in these matters by men like yourself and ——. There has been on your part, so far as I know, no open, public declaration, except the Purchas Remonstrance, on the side of the liberties of the Church. I cannot help disagreeing with you, my dear brother, in this. You may be right and I wrong, but it has always cut me to the heart to see you at the north end of your altar. Not that I would not go to any side or end, if ordered to do so by Convocation or any real spiritual authority.

To this letter Wilkinson replied :

St. Peter's Vicarage : Nov. 27, 1878.

My dearest Brother,—I will not dwell on the parts of your letter which refer to my own failings. God knows how many they are, and I hope you will always tell me of them.

I am going again to-day to see the Bishop, and strengthened at the Holy Table I will do my best for you and for your people.

It would, however, not be true not to put on paper what I feel.

1. I entirely enter into your feelings as to the dangers from Erastianism. I have solemnly in print laid before every Bishop of the Church the duty of obtaining for her free utterance—liberty to speak with a living voice. But I think you overlook

these points: Faith, patience, suffering, silent giving the other cheek, is the way by which the victories of our Lord are won. To submit, to suffer, to pray, is the Church's way to victory, alien as it is to the mind of Churchmen in the present day.

2. If our Lord respected the position of the wicked Scribes, would He not have attached importance to the judgment of a Christian Bishop?

3. The State did not encroach on the Church. The Bishops asked for and received the Public Worship Bill.

4. On what ground can you or I identify ourselves with the *living Church*? If Bishops, priests, and lay communicants were polled, I believe that *I* should be in a tremendous minority. I am *sure* that *you* would. Therefore, if we believe that we have the truth of God, quiet teaching, humble submission, unceasing effort to impregnate with true ideas the men and women of England, seem to be our duty, rather than to break up the whole existing system by presenting the strange anomaly of an army unable to obey its officers.

My dear Brother, I may be quite wrong, but this is what I feel, and what I am sure you would feel, if you were not warped by the false chivalry of standing by your party.

If my words are mistaken, and my letters pain you, at all events my people's prayers will bring you a blessing.

Ever yours affectionately,
G. H. Wilkinson.

The generous and Christian response which came by return of post would belong to another biography than that of Wilkinson, and so would its spirited criticism of those parts of Wilkinson's letter which were argumentative.

A couple of years later Mr. Bodington returned to the charge.

The Rev. C. Bodington to Mr. Wilkinson

St. James's Parsonage, Wednesbury: Sunday, Nov. 21, 1880.

My dear Brother,—Sunday as it is, I must find time to write a few lines to you. I was with my dear friend Enraght last night, who will, you know, be in Warwick Jail on Monday. You will, I know, always let me say anything to you. Well, dear Brother in Christ, I write to ask, what will *you* do now? God Almighty in His Providence has set you on high in London.

Your voice is a power. You are respected by many of all parties who may not agree with you. Let me place before you what many High Churchmen are thinking about you now—what one whom you know and respect, and who knows and esteems you, said to me the other day. It was in effect this :

'Wilkinson's position is extraordinary. There he is, with a ritual of his own devising, unlike that of any other church in Christendom, with a daily Celebration and the north end position. He is injuring his work without knowing it. He has a large staff of volunteer clergy, and cannot get really the ablest and best men to help him. Earnest and able High Churchmen will not go to him. The best men he has chafe under what is to them bondage which they endure for his sake. His really faithful laity are in the same state. St. John's is suffering from the cramping position which makes it an exact copy of St. Peter's. There is a want of elasticity. He brings people on to a certain point, and then many of them go off to communicate at St. Barnabas' or St. Paul's or St. Mary's. The worldly people at St. Peter's do not understand Wilkinson's consulting his congregation so much, and attribute it to weakness.'

This was in substance what I heard, and I have heard it before from others. Now others outside your friends are equally perplexed. 'Wilkinson asks Carter and Body and Villiers and others to preach for him, but why does he not burn his ships and speak out and take his place in the battle for the liberties of the Church ?'

My dear friend, it hurts me to think of all this—and I cannot help saying that to some extent I share in the feeling. It seems to me, however wrongly perhaps, that you are over sensitive about hurting the feelings of the Bishop, and over fearful about the effect of making any change upon your flock or some members of it. You appear to many to work secretly, as it were, for fear of the Jews—to feed the Lord's prophets by fifty in a cave, but not to speak to Ahab or Herod (I do not say against sin—for that all men know that you do fearlessly) about the Kingdom which is not of this world. We want to hear that voice of yours lifted up along with that of Pusey, Liddon, and Carter, saying 'Our Master's Kingdom is not of this world, and He cries aloud now for freedom.' We want to hear you say that Courts emanating from the sole authority of a Parliament which opens its doors to Mr. Bradlaugh who denies the being of God, to

Jews who deny the Messiahship of our Lord, to Roman Catholics who deny the mission of our Church, to Dissenters who have left her communion, are not spiritual courts, and the Parliament which gives them their authority is *not* the Parliament of communicant Churchmen which in union with Convocation passed the Act of Uniformity. We want you to read Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet on the Royal Supremacy republished two years ago and to say at least as much as he does about these unconstitutional Courts and judgments based on policy, not on law. We want you to leave the bleatings of the Eaton Square sheepfold, and the Church Societies, and the many good and useful things you are doing, and to come to the front of the battle and speak your mind and come to the help of the Lord against the mighty.

My dear friend, it seems to me that you are making the mistake Richard Twigg made here, of separating yourself practically from a movement in which you are intimately connected, because you do not approve of all that is done in it. The result is, that the men whom you *might* influence and moderate by your counsels are altogether uninfluenced by you.

Can you not at once go to the front of your altar? You have talked over it—prayed over it—why not quietly begin next Sunday? Enraght will be in gaol next Sunday for celebrating in the eastward position. He gave up the vestments and lights a year ago at his bishop's desire, and he is to go to gaol for not going to the north end. You are already a lawbreaker in more ways than one in the eyes of Lord Penzance and the Privy Council. It cannot therefore be a matter of conscience with you.

Then, again, can you see your way to join the English Church Union? Your joining it now with a short, quiet letter saying that you have done so would be a great help to—well, I believe, to yourself first, and then to others. If you and others in your position hold back now, you may depend upon it that before long we shall be driven to enter upon a campaign for the disestablishment of the Church. If you would step into your pulpit next Sunday morning and ask the prayers of your people for Thomas Pelham Dale, Richard William Enraght, Sydney Green, prisoners and captives for conscience sake—if you would say that you were at last constrained to join the E.C.U., and if you would quietly announce that you had taken the step so long contemplated of celebrating Eastward—well, you would hurt the feeling of your Bishop. You would offend some rich

people. You would perhaps have a 'Times' Leader directed against you, and you would be henceforward in a new and better position in the Kingdom of our Lord on earth—better, I mean, to work for Him—and who can say but that one bold, firm act on your part might do more than all secret influence towards remedying the great evils that are overhanging the Church?

You will take this like all my effusions to you, my dear brother, as first the utterance of what is in my mind. You let me say anything. If there is any truth in these thoughts, may God help you to lay hold of it. If there is error, may He enable you to avoid it.

I send a form of nomination to the E.C.U. in case you should wish to join us.

Ever yours affectionately,
In our Blessed Lord,
C. BODINGTON.

Wilkinson did not join the 'E.C.U.,' but the very Sunday that Mr. Bodington was penning this impassioned appeal Wilkinson had announced to his congregation, with the full explanation which was customary with him, that for the future he should adopt the contested position at the altar at all the early services, while retaining the other position at midday.

The appeal contained in Mr. Bodington's letter was really based upon an incorrect assumption. It presupposed that Wilkinson was in much closer agreement with 'Pusey, Liddon, and Carter,' than was the case. Greatly as he revered those men, and glad as he was to join with their followers in evangelistic work, his own position was very different from theirs. He felt acutely, as has been seen, the unspiritual state of bondage from which the Church of England was suffering. He was ready to undergo labours and reproaches in defence of imprisoned Ritualists who could not conscientiously recognise Lord Penzance's Court. But he was in no way to be identified with those whom he generously championed. The wonder was that he should have gone so far out of his way to show his sympathy with them. It must not for a moment be supposed that he was at heart one of their number who did not dare to avow himself to be so.

He continued to labour for the removal of the grievances which Churchmen felt. He urged the Archbishop to give some public promise that matters should be looked into, that something should be done to recover the liberties of the Church which the Public Worship Act had infringed. He wrote :

To the Archbishop of Canterbury

2 Grosvenor Gardens, S.W. : Dec. 29, 1880.

My dear Lord Archbishop,—Thank you for your kind message received through Mr. Davidson. After some days of consideration I think that I may without presumption look upon that message as justifying me in writing to your Grace with a freedom which, without such an invitation, would have been impertinent. I do not ask for 'a promise to be officially given that the Bishops are prepared to reconsider the present relations of Church and State.' I am sorry I used that phrase, and I quite see the force of Davidson's objection to it. What I ask is that in some informal way (such perhaps as a short note to some friend, to be published by him in the 'Guardian') your Grace should give an assurance that you would yourself direct the attention of the Bishops to the alleged grievances of the Church, and ask them at once to investigate them. . . . We all know that if you can say a few kind words to the effect, that though you do not agree with the speeches that you have read, and cannot get any expression of united opinion as to what is wanted, still you respect the evident earnestness of many who are disturbed about the alleged grievances of the Church, and that the first work of the Bishops in Convocation shall (so far as you have influence) be a calm and thorough investigation of these grievances, then I believe that hundreds would thank God and take courage, and persevere in silent obedience to those who are set over them. . . .

And believe that I am, yours most respectfully,

George H. Wilkinson.

The Archbishop's reply, which was published in the 'Guardian,' was the first indication of the policy which led to the appointment of the Ecclesiastical Courts Commission.[1]

[1] See *Life of Archbishop Tait*, vol. ii. p. 435 foll.

Here is an expression of Wilkinson's feeling at the time with regard to one controverted practice:

To the Hon. (*now the Hon. and Rev.*) *J. G. Adderley*

2 Grosvenor Gardens, S.W.: April 26, 1880.

My dear Adderley,—It is a pleasure to hear from you, and I hope you will never hesitate to write when I can be of any use to you.

I think that non-communicating attendance is *not* according to the mind of the Church. Her service appears to me to be entirely framed with the idea that the worshippers will communicate. I think that the feeling of being more likely to get a Blessing from a Celebration because we are in the actual building leads in time to a very low and material view of the Sacrament. Further, it is, I think, wrong to encourage non-communicating attendance, because it leads many to make the assisting a substitute for the receiving of our Lord's Body and Blood. All the special blessings of Holy Communion are linked in the Bible with the actual eating and drinking of the sacred elements—'Take eat—Drink—As often as ye *eat*,' &c.

On the other hand, I do not see the slightest objection to those who are helped by such a service remaining to pray and praise God at a second Celebration provided they have *communicated on that day*. This in fact would be my advice. Stay a second time if it helps you, provided that you have on *that day* communicated, and that you avoid the mistake of in your mind dividing the Blessed Sacrament (as it were) and offering a sacrifice at one time and receiving at another. Please write again if this is not quite clear. It is no trouble to me.

Ever yours truly,

George H. Wilkinson.

CHAPTER XII

PUBLIC WORK

THE clergy of the diocese of London in 1880 showed their confidence in the Vicar of St. Peter's by electing him their Proctor in Convocation. He had long held a high view of the office and value of the Convocations, and in the height of the Ritual troubles had endeavoured to promote the reform of those assemblies for the purpose of making them more effectively, what he believed them to be in essence, the Church of England by representation. He soon made his presence felt in Convocation. He spoke on the subject of the Burials Bill,[1] on the question of Reform,[2] on the representation of the laity in the councils of the Church,[3] in defence of the Ritualists,[4] in a deputation to the Upper House on the subject of Infidelity,[5] on the alleged increase of Immorality,[6] on the murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish,[7] on the Salvation Army,[8] on the Central Council of Diocesan Conferences.[9]

It is perhaps not often that a new member of the Lower House is immediately made Chairman of an important Committee of the House, but Wilkinson's zeal for Foreign Missions was so well known that he was at once put on the Committee, appointed on June 1, 1880, to consider the question of establishing a Board of Missions, and, as Chairman, presented the Report of that Committee in the following February. Only the ruling of the Prolocutor that such a course would be contrary to the

[1] *Journal of Convocation*, 1880, pp. 100, 219.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 186.
[3] *Ibid.* 1881, pp. 71, 357.
[4] *Ibid.* pp. 72, 137.
[5] *Ibid.* p. 241.
[6] *Ibid.* p. 399.
[7] *Ibid.* 1882, p. 166.
[8] *Ibid.* pp. 169, 178.
[9] *Ibid.* 1881, p. 357; 1882, p. 205.

precedents of the House prevented a vote of thanks from being offered to him for the service thus done to the Church.

The question had for some time been under discussion. As early as 1870 Committees of both Houses reported in favour of establishing such a Board. Various Reports on the subject were adopted in subsequent years, but nothing had come of them. Wilkinson's Committee urged that a definite step should at once be taken. They fully recognised the good work effected by existing missionary organisations, and felt that it would be a great mistake to interfere with their activities. Convocation, they said, possessed no executive ; it could not therefore undertake any part in providing funds. At the same time they were convinced that the Church in her Convocations possessed a power for fostering an interest in Missions which had hitherto lain dormant. They felt that the time was come for the Church of England ' to wipe off the reproach which has hitherto attached to her name—that, in spite of noble instances of individual generosity and great efforts of voluntary organisations, she has hitherto been sadly remiss, in her corporate capacity as a Church, in fulfilling the last commission of her Divine Founder, and extending His Kingdom to the uttermost parts of the earth.'

It was not till 1884, when Wilkinson had passed into the Upper House, that the scheme came into actual being. Whether the Board of Missions has altogether fulfilled the hopes which he entertained with regard to it, cannot be told. But his Committee laid it down in 1881 ' that the Board, in the first instance, be prepared to accept a humble position, and to put forward no claims to attempt startling reforms, but content itself with such simple work as, for lack of such an organisation, is at present left undone.' He thought that the great thing was that such a Board, authoritatively appointed by the Church itself, should exist : its achievements and its influence he was content to leave to the future.

The Mission which seems to have lain nearest to his heart was the Mission in North China. To it had gone in 1874 his friend and colleague Mr. Scott, under the Society for the Propaga-

tion of the Gospel. Five or six years later—years during which Wilkinson took an unflagging interest in Mr. Scott's work, and kept it steadily before his flock—the time came for a fresh development. The Church Missionary Society had for some time had a Mission in Peking, but it was not on any very large scale, and when the other great Society approached them on the subject they generously agreed to deliver over the station, and consented to the formation of a new missionary jurisdiction for North China. Through Wilkinson's exertions the money for founding the new see was raised, mainly by the munificence of one donor who chose to remain anonymous, and in 1880 Mr. Scott was consecrated Bishop on the Festival of St. Simon and St. Jude.

A little notebook written in Wilkinson's handwriting contains the principles on which the North China Mission was to be conducted. They are highly characteristic of the mind of the legislator. The Mission was to be 'entirely free—no societies to fetter its action.' It was

1. To live in the spirit of the New Covenant.

A. Sabbath spirit—Phil. iv. 4, St. Matt. vi. 25, Nehemiah xiii. 19, Hebrews iv. and parallel passages.

B. No provision (so far as possible) for to-morrow. Day by day—daily bread.

C. Entire surrender to our God. Poverty, obedience, &c., *spiritual*. No asceticism at first—see St. Vincent de Paul, Francis de Sales.

D. To carry the cross of being misunderstood by the religious world—as to system, belief, results.

2. Obedience to Bishop in Synod (however imperfect Synod may be at first). Each Priest to go where sent—to return home when sent, &c., by Bishop *in Synod*.

3. The Church of England as interpreted by its Prayer Book to be the starting point, but the Catholic principles of early Church, as adapted to China, and not a mere copy of Anglicanism, to be the τέλος at which we aim.

4. The Bishop will set the example of putting all his income into a common fund. Others will do as they like at first, but no stipend will be given—only a generous provision made for food and clothing, with a reserve fund.

5. The reserve fund for sickness, and to enable men at discretion of the Church to come back to England :

(*a*) For refreshment.

Bodily.
Mental.
Spiritual.

(*b*) For needs of the Church in China.

6. At first no settled plan as to Bishop's *Cathedra*. At first go to Chefoo and then decide as God may direct.

7. In all difficulties to have days of prayer and of waiting on God followed by conference, and, if need be, correspondence with the Church at Home.

Ultimate decision to rest with the Bishop.

8. A warm centre to which missionaries shall return from time to time. Here always

Daily Celebration.
Daily Offices.
Extempore prayer.
Daily study of Greek Testament *together*, especially Acts of Apostles and Pastoral Epistles.

9. All that is meant by Evangelical Liberty, Church Order, Sacramental System taken for granted.

N.B.—In all these principles will be seen the simple recognition of the Epistle to the Ephesians, &c., that all things are ours in Jesus Christ—that the part of the Body in China will be guided day by day by the Spirit which does really dwell in it.

10. Many members, yet but one body. Provisions hereafter for married and single clergy—men and women—laymen as well as clergy—Prophets, Evangelists, Teachers, &c. At first only single men (in case of new volunteers)—all these will live with Bishop at first.

11. To obtain from Church at home help in preachers to the English (see Bishop of Bombay's letter) from time to time.

12. To include both English and heathen, in such ways as may hereafter be thought desirable, in our ministrations. In this as in all else to watch and pray against one-sided views (all for English, all for Heathen, &c.).

13. Till Board of Missions is appointed by the Church, to have in England a Council of Bishops, Clergy, and Laity. Some matters to be referred only to the clerical members, others to the united body. This Council to have no actual labour in collecting money, but to form a committee for that purpose.

This legislation does not appear to have advanced beyond the paper stage, but several factors in it have been worked into the life of the Missions in Japan and in Corea, with both of which Wilkinson, through Bishops Bickersteth and Corfe, was closely connected.

Another mission in which Wilkinson took a special interest was that of the apostolic Bishop Callaway in Kaffraria. It was, to begin with, particularly the Mission of the Scotch Church, and there was something suitable in the fact that one who was destined to hold the highest place in that Church had long been a warm supporter of the Mission. Early in the Eaton Square days Bishop Callaway came to address the Missionary Guild, and from that time onwards wrote frequent letters to be read at its meetings and printed for distribution, and considerable sums of money and many gifts were sent out to him. The admiring friendship between the Bishop and Wilkinson only terminated—if it terminated—with the good Bishop's death in retirement at Croydon in 1890. Wilkinson, then Bishop of Truro, wrote to him on July 10, 1886 :

My dear Bishop,—It seems a long time since I heard anything of you. I remember you in my prayers, and I hope that you do not forget to help me in that the best and most efficacious of all ways.

I often think of our Holy Communion in the little chapel at Mr. Kingscote's. Some words also of yours have helped me at many a difficult time. You remember what you said about God being a Father, and that no father goes about to find things in his children which he shall condemn. Even so our Father in heaven tries to find things which He can praise, not blame, in us, His poor, helpless children.

Then you remember what you said about dealing with Satan as you would with a troublesome neighbour after you had once got a good advocate. You would pass on all the insulting letters to your lawyer.

How blessed is the peace which flows into our souls when we once realise that the government of the Church and of every part of it is upon the shoulders of our Lord, and that He does in very truth care for the Church and for our individual souls!

I hope you are fairly well, and that God is giving you the joy of gathering in a harvest from the seed, often sown in tears, in bygone years.

With all love, and hoping that you will not forget to pray for me, I am, my dear Bishop,

Ever yours affectionately,

G. H. Truron.

He paid him a visit at Croydon in 1887, and was deeply touched by the affectionate kindness with which the aged saint received him.

A mission of a somewhat different kind looks back to Wilkinson as in one sense its primary founder. Michael Rosenthal, the son of a Rabbi of Vilna who had taken up his abode at Jerusalem, came to England in the course of collecting alms, which he had been deputed to do, for the poor Jews of the Holy Land. Here he fell in with a learned convert from Judaism to Christianity, Dr. Ewald, and the result of the acquaintance was that Michael Rosenthal was himself converted to the faith. His first experiences as a Christian were not very encouraging; but early in the Eaton Square days he fell in with Wilkinson and his wife, who set themselves to befriend him. Wilkinson made every inquiry about him, endeavoured to gain for him admission to King's College, London, obtained pecuniary aid for him, and at length persuaded the Bishop of London to ordain him for missionary work among the Jews of East London, on a title from the Rev. S. J. Stone at St. Paul's, Haggerston, author not only of 'The Church's one foundation,' but also of that fervent intercession for the Jews, 'Unchanging God, hear from eternal heaven.'

Mrs. Moore, the daughter of Mr. Rosenthal, writes thus:

He was my father's dearest and oldest friend. They became acquainted about 1872 or 3. Through his influence my Father. . . took Orders and devoted his life to Jewish Mission work. During the time my Father worked at St. Paul's, Haggerston (from 1877 to 1890), his Jewish Mission work in that parish owed almost entire support to the congregation of St. Peter's, Eaton Square, interested in the work by Canon Wilkinson. . . . . Up to the time of my Father's death the

old friends at St. Peter's followed his work with sympathy. On going to Truro [Bishop Wilkinson] wrote that my Father should always appeal to him 'as a son to a father,' and in any difficulty he always did so. During the last few years, owing to the Bishop's many activities and bad health, his letters seem to have been chiefly Christmas greetings, but the spirit of affection remains unchanged.

Mrs. Moore adds :

The Bishop may be said to have been the first of his school of thought to take an interest in Jewish Missions, until then the monopoly of Evangelicals. My Father's work, inspired and fostered by him, furthered and stimulated that interest, the present outcome of which is a Diocesan Society, the East London Fund for the Jews, founded in 1889.

In 1883, Wilkinson wrote of Mr. Rosenthal :

I have known Mr. Rosenthal in a close and unbroken friendship for more than twelve years, and have been intimately acquainted with all the details of his Mission, and can testify to the blessing which God has vouchsafed to his labours. He is a remarkable man, of great culture and refinement and power of influencing his fellow-countrymen.

And again in 1895 :

I am very sorry to hear that there is this year a deficiency in the funds of your Mission. I hope that this will soon be supplied. Your work has been much blessed. You preach so fully both Evangelical and Church truth, that men of all schools of thought can support you. I heartily commend your Mission to any with whom my words may have any influence.

He is quoted as having said on some occasion that he 'never knew what real blessing was' upon his work at St. Peter's, 'until he had taken Jacob into his house.'

He was specially interested also in the philanthropic work of an American friend, Dr. Porter. Dr. Porter of Charleston was the famous chaplain at Confederate Headquarters in the

war between North and South, who rode through the night to give Jeff Davis the news of Lee's surrender.

'He lost his son in the war,' says one who knew him, 'and used to go and moan on his grave, till he heard a voice that said, "If you love the dead serve the living." He got up and determined to do something, and founded the great Porter Institute for the boys of the broken Southern gentry, who were almost running about the streets, and kept up the whole thing on prayer and wonderful spiritual adventures that the Bishop loved. The story was that he came to England to try and beg, and totally failed, and was turning back to America when a telegram was put in his hand as he was crossing the plank to the ship. The telegram meant that Wilkinson had been clearing off a lot of appeals, throwing them into the waste paper basket, and had suddenly dropped on Porter's, was immensely struck, and offered him a collection at St. Peter's. The offer reached him by that wire, he turned straight round, recrossed the plank, spoke at St. Peter's, and quite swept the vicar and all his friends. Wilkinson turned all his laymen on to him, and for years F. A. White and Thomas Kingscote, and others, backed Dr. Porter, and finally a wing was built in memory of Mrs. Wilkinson at the Institute.'

Dr. Porter was with Wilkinson again in Egypt in the dreary time before he resigned the see of Truro. He was in many respects a strange and unconventional person, but with a certain prophetic fire about him. He played a considerable part for many years in Wilkinson's history.

A very important work, which engaged much of Wilkinson's attention towards the end of his time at St. Peter's, was that of the Pimlico Ladies' Association. He was not the originator of it, nor was the work confined to his parish. But it went straight to Wilkinson's heart, and long after he ceased to be locally connected with Pimlico, he returned from time to time to address the associates.

This Association, to quote the words of Adeline Duchess of Bedford in 1891, was formed ten years ago, and has increased with remarkable vigour ever since, developments of the work

extending in directions which seemed quite beyond its reach in the early days of its existence. From the first it has striven to give equal prominence to Preventive and Rescue Work, and we can truly say that those who are engaged in either branch feel that an impetus is given them by their connexion with one another.

The methods and principles of Penitentiary Work much occupied Wilkinson's mind, and he published a small volume on the subject. His London experience in this matter served him in good stead when he afterwards came to organise such work on a diocesan scale.

In a discussion which took place in the Upper House of Convocation in 1883 on the subject of promoting purity of life among men, the President referred to the fact that a body of the clergy and laity connected with St. Peter's, Eaton Square, under the guidance of Mr. Wilkinson (by that time Bishop of Truro) had been for nearly two years consulting how best this work could be done, and they had at length formed themselves into a parochial organisation, which was widely extended and had great influence. He described some of the steps by which that organisation, and the Bishop of Truro in particular, had advanced the cause. The Bishop then said that the subject had been forced most unwillingly upon himself. The organisations in his parish were very large, and it appeared utterly impossible to undertake any new work. He was obliged, however, to learn, in order to give an address at Oxford, the appalling fact of the abominable wickedness that was being perpetrated in England, and it appeared to him that no parish priest could possibly hold his hand without giving his parishioners the opportunity of combining to remedy these evils. Accordingly a society was formed, intended at first to be simply parochial, but it was found by degrees that something beyond a mere parochial society was needed for any real permanent influence.

He urged the formation of a society standing in the same relation to the Church of England as the Church of England Temperance Society. He was certain from his experience

with young men that if the Church undertook this work, she would rally round her the noblest spirits of the age.[1]

The organisation referred to was that known as the Churchmen's Union, connected with St. Peter's, Eaton Square. Its objects were :

1. To protect women and children from dishonour and degradation.
2. To form a higher standard, and a better public opinion on the obligation of purity upon *men*, by embodying in the members' lives, and diffusing among their fellow-men, the spirit of godly self-restraint and Christian chivalry.

Membership was open to all men who were willing to regard it as involving the following obligations :

1. To consider it a sacred duty to protect, so far as they are able, women and children from dishonour and degradation.
2. To endeavour to discountenance all conversation and conduct derogatory to women.
3. To uphold the equal obligation of the law of purity on men and women alike.
4. To use every means to keep themselves from impure thoughts, words, and deeds.
5. To endeavour to spread these principles.

In reviewing what was done in the summer of 1882, says the Report of the 'Churchmen's Union,' it may suffice to say further, that three main principles were practically agreed upon by those who took part in the work :—

1. That the object should be not merely to rescue the victims of existing vice, but to seek so to raise the tone of men towards women and towards each other as, in some measure, to check immorality at its source.
2. That prayer should be recognised as the necessary preliminary and accompaniment of action.
3. That action should be that of the Church in her corporate capacity, if possible, and, at any rate, that, as the subject was being considered in her Convocations, their recommendations should form the basis of the present effort.

[1] *Journal of Convocation*, 1883, p. 213 foll.

CHAPTER XIII

THE CURE OF SOULS

Behind and beyond all this public work, this management of organisations, lay a vast private labour with souls and for souls. Wilkinson was not primarily the ecclesiastic, nor even the preacher, but the pastor. It is a marvel how he was able to find time for all the work which the world saw, when it is remembered how many hours in a week he was shut up in the vestry of St. Peter's, hearing confessions, or giving help in some form to those who sought it. Nor was his work in that direction the work of one who sits and listens, and gives utterance to general platitudes and perfunctory absolutions. It was an energetic and exhausting work. He threw his whole spiritual force into the cases with which he had to deal. The uninteresting cases were as thoroughly dealt with as the interesting. He followed them up, and carried them on, and wrestled over them in prayer, and took thought for them when they were no longer in his sight. A few years more at St. Peter's would probably have killed him with the sheer weight of the souls which hung upon him.

One of his most trusted and faithful colleagues at St. Peter's, the Rev. A. Fairbanks, sends the following extracts from notes of Wilkinson's, illustrating various points in his pastoral work.

Care for Souls.—(i.) (A face seen in church. Letter to me.)

April 4, 1882. Mrs. —— (address). Can you go and see her—say that I was sure she was in some trouble, and that, as it might be long before I was able to call, I wanted you to see her, to give her (D.V.) a happy Easter. Thank her for a book which she gave me. Tell me about her, please.

(ii.) (One whom I had been asked to see.)

I take for granted that you will take charge of —— (1) to

peace; (2) from peace. I think that when once he has found peace Confession would be very desirable for him, also guidance as to future life. He needs ghostly strength and deliverance from anxiety for and love of money.

(I could multiply such notes.)

Care of Workers.—(i.) (To an older curate, about a new deacon.)

June 17, 1882. I want you to help —— in forming a plan, and to show it to me:

1. For Devotion—so much.
2. For Church Services—so much.
3. For Intellectual reading—
4. For learning his work—e.g. Time to look at working of Schools, and Sunday Schools; Parochial Council, &c.
5. Any work you like provided it is *under you.*

(ii.) (The same.)

June 22, 1882. You quite understand that I depend on you as regards —— (1) to let him have his plan of life and work; (2) to see him from time to time, pray with him, act as his Vicar, and tell me about him from time to time.

(iii.) (About the same deacon.)

Oct. 19, 1882. When you send me list of work will you tell me how much time you devote to training ——, what you are doing for him as regards:

(*a*) His own life { Intellectually. / Spiritually.

(*b*) His work?

(iv.) (On the engagement of a new parish nurse.)

Oct. 27, 1882. Will you kindly see the parish nurse, look into the arrangements as to her time, plan of life, &c., &c.? Consult me when necessary but be her pastor. Please when you have seen her and arranged all, let me see her to give her the Blessing.

(v.) (To a curate, who had doubts whether he was rightly distributing the use of his time.)

Feb. 8, 1883. I understand the difficulty, dear ——, but it is not always wrong to do what we like, and I think *this* is *not* a wrong distribution.

(vi.) (To a curate—not strong.)

Feb. 7, 1883. I think, my dear ——, that under present circumstances I should do the *very least* that my conscience allowed about Fasting this Lent (for the sake of the work).

Care of Workers' Health.—Dec. 31, 1882. I am so glad you are going away, and hope you will thoroughly enjoy your four days. . . . With every best wish for the New Year, and praying God to give back to you in Blessing all the help which you give to me. . . .

I am thankful you are going away next week. It is very important for you to do so.

Nov. 30, 1882. I should see ——, and if possible go away as you proposed *next* week. Say to —— that the Vicar pulls you all up if you do not keep your holiday, as it only makes you break down and upset everything.

July 15, 1882. You must not think of yesterday, my dear ——. It was not at all inconvenient ; I am only sorry for your suffering. Have you any good Burgundy or Port Wine, and a good tonic ? Would not two or three nights out of London do you good ?

Yes, dear ——. I am very thankful. May God give you a happy, restful three days. Why should you not stay till noon on Saturday ?—I will gladly take the Celebration. I like it.

Very sorry, dear ——, but thankful you are doing God's will [in going away during Holy Week] humbly and quietly. Often an illness gives sacrificial power to work. May He ever Bless you.

If you are not out of London on —— will you dine at 7.45 ? but as a matter of duty I ask you not to give up a chance of fresh country air.

May 12, 1882. I hope you are not very tired after your hard work. I was glad to see you looking bright and cheery, but I reproached myself afterwards with having even spoken about the . . . and so added a straw to the load.

Mr. Fairbanks adds :

Two of the dear Bishop's sayings come back to me :

1. The strongest faith is sometimes shown in acting as if we felt, when we have not the power to realise anything (at the time).

2. The clergy and the doctors are doing the two parts of the work which our Lord did on earth : the one carrying on His work of caring for the souls—the other . . . caring for the bodies of men.

He always enjoined loyalty to the doctor's directions, as obedience to our Lord.

I remember his saying to me that after his breakdown in 1879 he had to face definitely giving up one-third of his work for the rest of his life.

To a Friend who had been ordered to leave his Parish, and who had had a serious difficulty with one of his Workers.

2 Grosvenor Gardens, S.W. : Feb. 15, 1883.

My dearest Brother,—It is so hard to bear. I pray God to lighten the burden. . . . It may be that the man has to be dealt with *before* you leave, and so the trouble is given you to bear for your successor. But it is so terrible when we are weak and these things come. I was so nearly knocked up with weariness and sorrow last night, but this morning came the text, 'Who ever trusted in Him and was confounded?' and that Blessed Sacrament was used by Him to scatter the cloud.

I was so glad that though I made a miserable failure while the darkness lasted, I kept saying to myself, 'Vigil first, Feast will come after;' but it helps me to feel for you, dear Brother.

Now, another matter. H—— and I, with Mrs. H—— as assessor, went into your case. We decided that your duty was, at once, this Lent, to arrange for a real rest—to go away, not to listen to the old voice which always speaks when we are ill, 'You cannot,' &c., &c., but to go.

We made necessary arrangements. You will tell me the enclosed [a cheque for 100*l.*] has reached you—on this postcard. It is only to be used in getting away for a thorough rest. Would L—— or M—— go with you?

With much love,

Ever affly.,

G. H. W.

To the Eaton Square period of his ministry it belongs to mention Wilkinson's various books. As a matter of fact he wrote hardly anything. 'Be ye reconciled to God' was written, as we have seen, at Auckland; but almost all, if not all, the other books were printed from notes of his addresses, taken down at the time by Miss Kate Hankey, the authoress of the tender and well-known poem 'Tell me the old, old story.' The list of his works thus published is a very long one, and few religious books have had a larger sale, or carried a wider influence than the chief of them. 'Instructions in the Devotional Life' has

reached its seventy-seventh thousand; 'Instructions in the Way of Salvation' its forty-first thousand; 'Lent Lectures' is in its twenty-sixth thousand; 'Holy Week and Easter' also in its twenty-sixth; 'The Chastening of the Lord' in its seventeenth; 'How to Keep Lent' in its twelfth. 'The Communion of Saints' is in its sixteenth edition; 'How to begin a New Life' in its ninth; 'First Steps to Holy Communion' in its eleventh. 'Some Laws in God's Spiritual Kingdom,' 'How to deal with Temptation,' and 'Thoughts on Calvary' are almost as widely known.[1] Many thousands of people who never saw Wilkinson's face felt that he had begotten them again in the Gospel by means of these and other little books. As time went on, Wilkinson himself used them largely as aids in his pastoral work. Many of his later letters of spiritual counsel consist to a great extent of references to particular pages or chapters in the books, which he advised his correspondents to read, very frequently sending them the books for the purpose.

It is small wonder that he felt deeply his indebtedness to Miss Hankey. He wrote to her when Bishop of Truro:

Hotel de Crocedi, Malta, Spezzia: Jan. 28, 1884.

My dear Miss Hankey,—As I wander about in this most delightful three weeks holiday, I find continually persons whom God has helped through my books, and I think again and again how, without you, they would never have been published, and I pray God to give back the Blessing which they have been to others, to you and Reggie in any way that you each may need His Blessing.

We are starting homewards to-morrow, having come thus far to see Mr. Williamson and Carrie, and have a Communion again with them.

As I look out of the window, the glorious evening sunlight is falling on the snowy mountains with an unspeakable splendour, but not less touching is the way in which the golden light is gladdening every little cottage and tiny hillock and separate blade of grass. God Bless you always,

Ever your friend and Pastor,

Georg: H. Truron.

[1] From information kindly supplied by Messrs. Wells Gardner, Darton & Co., to the publishers.

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